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# A Miniseries of Unfortunate Events: Realizing the Full Potential of Lemony Snicket's Book Series through Television Adaptation

Ryan T. Pait

Western Kentucky University, [ryan.pait891@topper.wku.edu](mailto:ryan.pait891@topper.wku.edu)

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A MINISERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS:  
REALIZING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF LEMONY SNICKET'S BOOK SERIES  
THROUGH TELEVISION ADAPTATION

A Capstone Experience/Thesis Project

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree Bachelor of Arts with

Honors College Graduate Distinction at Western Kentucky University

By

Ryan T. Pait

\*\*\*\*\*

Western Kentucky University  
2015

CE/T Committee:

Dr. Ted Hovet, Advisor

Dr. Jerod Hollyfield

Mr. Derick Strobe

Approved by

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Advisor  
Department of English

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## ABSTRACT

Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, a series of 13 children's books, seemed like it had the potential to become a massive franchise in a similar vein to the Harry Potter film series. Snicket's books feature three plucky protagonists, a sinister villain, and constantly-shifting settings—all elements that could make a successful movie series. A film adaptation, titled *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events* was made in 2004. It adapted the first three books in the series, and became a moderate financial and critical success. Despite the success, no further films were made.

As a fan of Snicket's books, I was disappointed to see the film series end so abruptly. I thought that the episodic nature of Snicket's books would work well as a television miniseries, which became the basis for this project. My project includes two full scripts (adapting two books from Snicket's series) as well as a character list, an episode outline for the entire series, and a list of possible production schematics. The introduction contextualizes my project in terms of other book-to-television adaptations and allows for personal commentary on my adaptation process.

Keywords: A Series of Unfortunate Events, Lemony Snicket, television, adaptation

Dedicated to my family and friends, who make my life a little less unfortunate

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

If I'm being completely honest, I'm very sad to see this project at its end. I still want to keep working on it, which I think is the sign of a fulfilling project.

Thank you to Dr. Ted Hovet and Dr. Jerod Hollyfield, my project advisors, for their excellent advice, thoughtful suggestions, and creative challenges. This project wouldn't be in the shape that it is today without them, and I look forward to working with them again in the future.

Thanks must be given to my friends and family as well. Thanks to all of you for listening to me blather on about this project endlessly for the past year and for always telling me how cool it is. Brenna, thank you for all of your casting suggestions and for your dramatic readings of the scripts. Mom and Dad, thank you for always supporting me and for fostering and encouraging my love for reading from a very early age. Reading is one of life's greatest gifts, and I'm glad you gave it to me. It's shaped my life in the biggest way.

Finally, thank you to Lemony Snicket for writing a series of books that has enriched my life and expanded my love for reading. I'm thankful that I got to grow up with these books and revisit them again and again over the years.

And no hard feelings about not coming to visit my elementary school in fourth grade, even though I wrote you a letter and was the president (and sole member) of the Lemony Snicket Fan Club. We're still cool.

## VITA

June 27, 1993.....	Born – Elizabethtown, Kentucky
2011.....	Elizabethtown High School, Elizabethtown, KY
2011 – 2015.....	Regents Scholarship Recipient
2012 – 2014.....	TV Columnist, <i>The College Heights Herald</i>
2012 – 2015.....	Tutor, The Learning Center
2013 – 2015.....	Dean’s Council of Students, Potter College of Arts and Letters
2014, 2015.....	Intern, Literary Arts Reporter, Chautauqua, NY
2014 – 2015.....	Thomas R. Curran Scholarship Recipient
2014 – 2015.....	Writing Editor, <i>Talisman</i>
2015.....	Presenter, 45 <sup>th</sup> Annual Student Research Conference, WKU
2015.....	Outstanding Student Award, Popular Culture Studies

## FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Popular Culture Studies

Minor Field: Journalism Writing



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Abstract.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Vita.....	vi
List of Figures.....	viii
Chapters:	
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Character List.....	23
3. Series Outline.....	44
4. Production Notes.....	65
5. Episode 1 Script.....	69
6. Episode 6 Script.....	132
Works Cited.....	196

## LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
1.....	1
2.....	13
3.....	17

*All the secrets of the world are contained in books. Read at your own risk.*

- Lemony Snicket

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

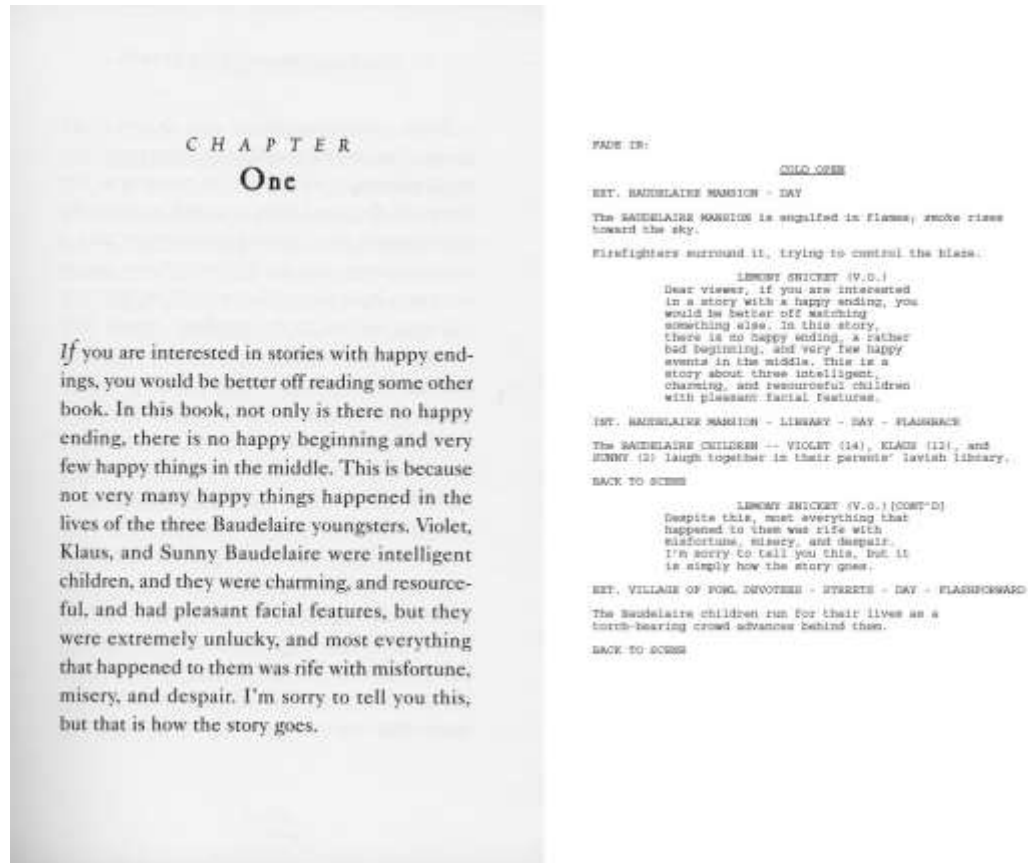


Figure 1. Left: page 1 of *The Bad Beginning*. Right: page 1 of "Orphans!"

### 1. The Bad Beginning

In Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, the Baudelaire children's adventure begins with a spark: one that consumes their home, their parents, and everything they have ever known. Siblings Violet, Klaus, and Sunny Baudelaire embark on a journey filled alternately with misery and triumph, all while the wicked Count Olaf

pursues them relentlessly. My adventure also began with a spark—but one of inspiration, not destruction.

As a fan of Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, my initial plan for my thesis was to use different modes of criticism to prove that Snicket's books had serious literary merit. The series, essentially a thirteen-part bildungsroman, overflows with sharp characterization, clever plotting, and in-the-know literary references. I've read the series multiple times, finding deeper appreciation for it each time I finish it. I still remember the first time I read it. I tore through the first book on the way to an elementary school field trip, desperately wishing I could just stay on the bus and finish my book rather than going on the actual field trip. I even wrote a letter to Snicket in the fourth grade, begging him to come visit my school and read to us—in reference to a passage in *The Reptile Room*, the second book in the series, I used the word “please” 209 times in a row to plead my case. My enthusiasm for Snicket's books had not dulled over the years. I knew that these were the texts I wanted to work with for my thesis. What better way to spend a year of work on an academic project than with a lifelong literary friend?

In the early stages of planning, I met with a former professor of mine to get his opinion on my idea of doing a literary analysis and criticism of the series. My professor told me that what I wanted to do was possible, but that it might not be the most fulfilling project in the world—especially when said project was to be worked on over the course of an academic year. What I took from this statement was that as much as the world of literary criticism should be appreciated, it maybe isn't the most exciting or sexy one. Something else from our meeting also stuck with me. My professor asked me why I thought Snicket's series hadn't exploded into a multimedia franchise phenomenon like

the *Harry Potter* series had—the books were adapted into a film in 2004, but the film adapted only the first three books in the series and no further movies were made. He told me to think on it, and to consider all my options before committing to a project I might get tired of halfway through the process.

And I did think on it. All thoughts of literary criticism seemed to pass out of my head as I began to ruminate on that one question: why hadn't *A Series of Unfortunate Events* become something massive? It had all the potential in the world, as well as the essential elements for an ongoing film franchise: plucky protagonists, fun plots, a terrific villain. The feature film, titled *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events* and directed by Brad Silberling, was a modest success both critically and financially. It grossed nearly \$210 million against a \$140 million production budget (*Box Office Mojo*). It was nominated for four Oscars at the 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Academy Awards, and won one for Makeup ("Academy Awards Database"). It had a distinct visual palette, a darkly comic tone, and even starred Jim Carrey as Count Olaf and Meryl freaking Streep as Aunt Josephine.

Film seemed to make perfect sense—at least at first—as the medium of choice for adapting Snicket's series. Film is more traditional than television, in that it has existed and been popular for a longer amount of time. The long-standing tradition of film also makes it prestigious. This prestige can be roughly translated into the phenomenon of "awards season," which has almost become an industry in its own right in Hollywood. Producers, directors, and actors all campaign like politicians in order to secure awards, honors, and most importantly, paying viewers for their work. Movies also have the potential of making massive amounts of money. Other children's and young adult books

like *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* have spawned multi-film franchises that raked in billions of dollars. But one of the problems with film franchises—particularly those adapting multiple works—are the limitations of film as a medium. Feature films generally have a two-hour runtime. Even if they are part of a series or franchise, each individual film is expected to stand alone and make sense as a singular and isolated artistic work. And while successful movies make money, they are still huge, multi-million dollar investments. Many of these limitations applied to Silberling's take on Snicket's first three books.

I liked the film, and I still have it on my own movie shelf. For a movie that's trying to squish three 150+-page books into a little under two hours of screen time, it's a very good adaptation. It could have continued as a franchise. Daniel Handler, the real author behind the pseudonym Lemony Snicket, expressed some dubious hope about the film series' potential future in an interview with Bookslut.com in 2008:

Believe it or not a sequel does seem to be in the works. Paramount has had quite a few corporate shakeups, widely documented in articles I find too stupefying to finish, which has led to many a delay. Of course many, many plans in Hollywood come to naught, but I'm assured that another film will be made. Someday.

Perhaps. (Scott)

Handler's skepticism was not completely unfounded. As of 2015, no further films have been made. Everyone involved with the initial film has moved on. Director Brad Silberling has directed multiple films and television episodes. Composer Thomas Newman and costume designer Colleen Atwood continue to compose music, design costumes, and get nominated for Oscars. Emily Browning, who played Violet, has made

quite an acting career for herself. And Jim Carrey and Meryl Streep continue to find work.

While everyone involved with the movie moved on years ago, I continued to be stuck on it. The question my professor had posed would not leave my head. Here was a book series—a book series that I loved, no less—that overflowed with elements that seemed like a natural fit for a big-screen adaptation. And while that big-screen adaptation had been made, something about it obviously didn't work, because no further movies were produced.

I felt like Klaus, the wheels of my brain turning rapidly. And like most great ideas, it finally came to me as I was trying to fall asleep one night—I think the time was somewhere around 2 a.m. I was annoyed that inspiration had struck this late, but I was also giddy with excitement, because I had finally figured out what my thesis project was going to be. All of my noble thoughts of literary criticism hit the floor like a harpoon gun as my realization came into focus. The Baudelaires and Count Olaf, perfect on the page, still seemed destined for the screen. They had just been put on the wrong one.

## **2. The Brilliant Brainwave**

It had to be television. This dawned on me as I struggled to fall asleep. Thirteen books comprise Snicket's series. Many television series now run with shortened 13-episode seasons, as opposed to the 20-plus episode seasons of the past. *A Series of Unfortunate Events* is highly episodic, as most books written largely for children are—each book features the Baudelaires in a new location, often with a new guardian and with Count Olaf in a new disguise. As I thought about it more and more, it all began to click



into place. Other large book series like George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* and Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* had found massive success when adapted as the television series *Game of Thrones* and *Sherlock*, respectively. Each book in Snicket's series could be the basis for an episode, and the series could be broadcast in two separate sections—much like the final seasons of AMC's *Breaking Bad* and *Mad Men*—in order to allow a production break and time for the children playing the Baudelaires to age a little as they do over the course of the books.

I was jumping way ahead. I didn't need to start figuring out production schematics just yet. But I had my idea. Forget literary criticism—I was going to adapt *A Series of Unfortunate Events* for television.

Television's reputation has been on the rise over the past decade. With prestigious basic cable dramas like *Mad Men* and *Breaking Bad*, successful streaming experiments like *House of Cards* and *Transparent*, massive pay cable series like *Game of Thrones*, and even network hits like *The Good Wife* and *Empire*, TV's profile has been on an uptick. In a piece for his media column in the New York Times, titled "Barely Keeping Up in TV's New Golden Age," the late David Carr comments on the changing arena of television—a medium previously thought to be mind-numbing and low:

The vast wasteland of television has been replaced by an excess of excellence that is fundamentally altering my media diet and threatening to consume my waking life in the process. I am not alone. Even as alternatives proliferate and people cut the cord, they are continuing to spend ever more time in front of the TV without a trace of embarrassment. (Carr)

What Carr hits at is that the television market has been swamped with an abundance of programming, and much of it is of very high quality. He opens the column with a short anecdote: his friend telling him to watch Comedy Central's *Broad City*. Carr's reaction? "Oh no, not another one" (Carr). Carr is not alone in his views that TV is in the midst of a resurgence and explosion of compelling content. TV critic Ryan McGee asserts that the silver age of television arrived in 2013 (McGee), and fellow critic Todd VanDerWerff asserts that the golden age of TV started in the 1950s and recurs every decade (VanDerWerff). While there isn't an established consensus (or title) for the era of modern TV, one thing that is clear is that the medium's reputation is changing. This is also aided by the artists now involved in TV production. Prestigious film directors like Jane Campion, David Fincher, and Steven Soderbergh have experimented with the television format with shows like *Top of the Lake*, *House of Cards*, and *The Knick*, removing some of the stigma that television is a "lower" art form. Well-known and award-winning film actors have also migrated to the small screen, citing meatier roles, better writing, and more interesting storytelling.

This change in reputation—and the inundation of quality programming that has sprung from it—illuminated and bolstered my decision to adapt Snicket's series for television rather than for film. The film treatment of Snicket's books had failed in a way, but the structure of the series seemed like a perfect fit for the brave new world of TV's golden (or silver, or bronze, or whatever) age.

I floated my idea to one of my best friends, someone who had also read Snicket's series. She agreed that it was a good idea, and encouraged me to discuss it with my professor for my thesis proposal writing class. When I presented it to him, he seemed just

as excited as me, and said that based on my enthusiasm, it sounded like I had found what I really wanted to do for my thesis. I also began the process of searching out my first and second readers for my project: the two professionals that would be able to take my project from a castle in the air to something a little more grounded. As all the parts of the thesis process began to lock into place at the end of the semester—proposal written, readers committed—it became time to truly set out on my thesis adventure.

I reflected on what my professor for my proposal writing class had said to me after presenting my idea. I really had found something that I wanted to do: something that would challenge me and make me happy as it did so. As I thought about my project more and more, my enthusiasm grew. I was going to get to do something fun with something I loved.

### **3. The Wicked Work**

Now came the hard part.

My readers, Dr. Hovet and Dr. Hollyfield, both advised me to begin working on my project over the summer, just so I could have a head start when the time came for my actual coursework. The plan for my project as I had discussed it with my readers was that my completed thesis would contain a pilot script for the series, an introduction and reflection section, an episodic outline for the entire series, and a list of some possible production schematics.

I started with the pilot script, which would be the meat of my project. Most scripts for hour-long series are around 60 pages, and both of my readers advised me to shoot for somewhere around that number when I wrote my episode. I was maybe a little cockier

than I should have been at this stage. In my film adaptation class that I had taken a few years before (which was actually taught by one of my readers), I had written a short portion of a screenplay, adapting Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Looking back on it now, I can say that this screenplay portion was very literal and more than a little on the nose, but at least I had been through this process before. With Lemony Snicket's *The Bad Beginning* and Paul Argentini's *Elements of Style for Screenwriters* in hand, I began writing.

Unlike a lot of aspiring screenwriters, I had things a little easier. There was no pressure on me to get my project sold—it was an academic exercise, not my livelihood. Screenwriting can be a tough profession to find success in. Many talented writers in the industry toil away for years taking work as they can get it, while their passion projects remain unproduced. Screenwriters also face enormous pressure to perfect their scripts in order to get them sold and developed, another worrisome aspect that I got to set aside. The field of screenwriting is also one explored that's been explored academically. Countless books exist on the topic, such as Syd Field's *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting* and Blake Snyder's *Save the Cat: The Last Book on Screenwriting You'll Ever Need*. As an amateur and not-at-all professional screenwriter for the intents and purposes of my thesis, I got to pursue my passion project without having to worry about it being produced, bought, or developed. I was also adapting a work, rather than coming up with an entirely original project. And the material I was adapting was material that I had been intimately familiar with for over 10 years. Onward and upward.

As I looked at the first page of *The Bad Beginning*, I realized that I already had an adaptation choice to make. *A Series of Unfortunate Events* is narrated by Snicket, who exists as a character in the universe of the books. His mission, as per the books, is to tell

the story of the Baudelaire children, as unfortunate as it may be. As Snicket says, “I’m sorry to tell you this, but that is how the story goes” (*Bad Beginning* 1). So should I keep the narration? I knew that I had some flexibility as well as some power in this situation. As theorist Linda Hutcheon says in her book *A Theory of Adaptation*, “Like classical imitation, adaptation also is not slavish copying; it is a process of making the adapted material one’s own. In both, the novelty is in what one *does with* the other text” (Hutcheon 20). Per Hutcheon’s orders (and per the advice of my readers), I didn’t have to be slavish as I adapted Snicket’s works. But in this instance, I felt like being slavish was the right choice. Snicket’s narration helps smooth the flow of the books, offering transitions between scenes as well as new information for the readers. Snicket’s fictional family members also come into play within the history of the books and in the Baudelaire’s lives. I had also liked the use of Snicket’s narration as voiceover in the 2004 film, where Jude Law played Snicket. With these ideas in mind, I decided to keep Snicket’s narration as an element in my adaptation. This prior knowledge of mine helped inform my decision, something that Hutcheon remarks on: “If we know that prior text, we always feel its presence shadowing the one we are experiencing directly” (Hutcheon 6). I felt this very clearly—the presence of Snicket’s original work, the presence of the previous adaptation, and the presence of Snicket as a character, hovering over the Baudelaire children while he narrates their many adventures.

So, I made the first of many adaptation choices. As the summer went on, I realized that there were many other choices I had to make as well. For instance, in novels, chapters can end without much resolution. Snicket does this in his series, and one of my early adaptation dilemmas occurred when I had to decide how to transition among the

book's scenes. While some problems were easier to solve than others, some gave me pause. I felt that I was being too abrupt, jumping around with wild abandon. Film theorist Robert Stam asserts that,

[I]n fact, there can be no real equivalence between source novel and adaptation.

While a film can recapitulate the outlines of the basic story... the actual resulting texts in their densely-signifying materiality will be in many ways incommensurable. Everything in literature is an act of language; it does recount but it does not literally represent or enact. (Stam 18)

This became clearer and clearer to me as I continued working. I could not literally adapt every word of Snicket's book. Even if I figured out some alchemical process that would allow me to adapt it word for word, the story wouldn't be the same. Books and television are entirely different media, one written and one visual, and this realization (however obvious it was), forced me to be more creative in what I was doing. With my script, I had to find ways to show rather than tell. As the summer drew to a close, I hit the 30-page mark of my script. I was halfway there.

Little did I know that I was really only a quarter of the way there.

#### **4. The Rightful Revisions**

Being the sometimes obnoxiously dutiful student that I am, I updated my readers on my progress as the fall semester started, eager to see what they thought of what I had completed. Both were enthusiastic about the progress I'd made—I think they had expected me just to create an episode outline, not jump in headfirst. As a lifelong overachiever, I had done just that. When I met with Dr. Hovet to discuss my progress, he

told me I was on the right track, and that what I had done was good. But he also advised me to use my knowledge of the series and the fact that I was adapting it for television to my advantage.

Although a little disconcerted and unsure of where to go with this suggestion at first, I soon came to realize that he was right. Snicket's books overflow with secrets and questions, and one of the main themes of the series is that some secrets don't matter and some questions don't get answered. There is an entire history that buried beneath the Baudelaire children's adventures—one that involves their parents, the Snicket family, Count Olaf, and a secret organization. Dr. Hovet suggested that I utilize this in my own adaptation—I was familiar with this information, so why not put it to good use? Dr. Hovet's proposal was in line with something that theorist Julie Sanders asserts in her book, *Adaptation and Appropriation*. She writes, "...the rewrite, be it in the form of novel, play, poem, or film, invariably transcends mere imitation, serving instead in the capacity of incremental literature, adding, supplementing, improvising, innovating. The aim is not replication as such, but rather complication, expansion rather than contraction" (Sanders 12). This was a way that I could expand and complicate the universe of the Baudelaires and of my adaptation. As in other TV series such as *Lost* and *Game of Thrones*, I could use the secret history that lies beneath the surface of the Baudelaire's adventures to build mythology within the show and make my adaptation more distinctive. One way of doing this, Dr. Hovet suggested, was to use the format of a television series to my advantage. It can become confusing in books when the action shifts into the past or the future without much warning. Television, on the other hand, offered me the opportunity to play with the structure of the story in a visual way. Dr. Hovet suggested

that as I worked on the second half of my pilot script, I should try to play with the timeline—to shift forward and backward in time, using these scenes to help break up the plot as well as expand it, and to show the scope of the series as a whole. I had been slavish to the text, and now was my opportunity to break those chains and try something different.

I did just that as I forged ahead with the second half of the pilot. When the story allowed for it, I inserted flashforwards, flashbacks, and other small scenes that both broke up the pacing of the main plot and gave a glimpse of what was to come and what had occurred in the past of the universe of the show.

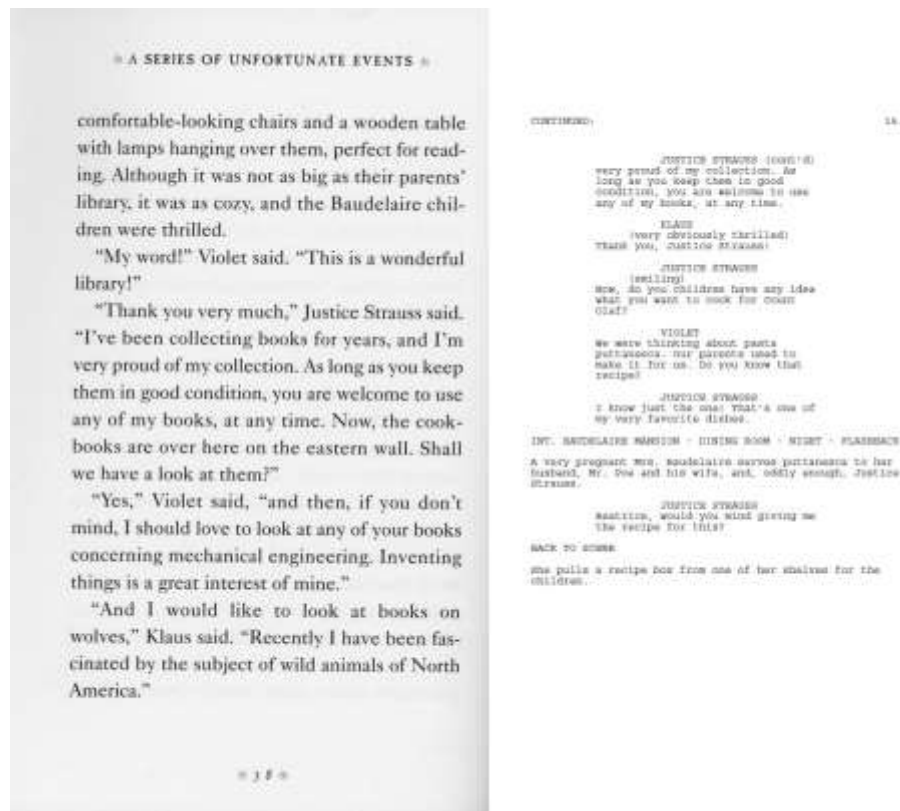


Figure 2. Left: page 38 of *The Bad Beginning*. Right: page 15 of *"Orphans!"*



The final pilot script includes both flashforwards and flashbacks, all of which provide a little more context for the audience on the Baudelaire children and their lives before they became orphans. It also includes scenes only mentioned in passing in the books. Some of these scenes are pure invention (such as the scene where Justice Strauss dines with the Baudelaire parents and Mr. and Mrs. Poe) and some are extrapolations of smaller parts of Snicket's canon (such as the scene where a young Count Olaf eats a raspberry at V.F.D. headquarters or the scene where a young Justice Strauss steals a horse). As I began implementing these changes, I saw the difference that it made—previously flat characters gained more depth, some of the history of the Baudelaire's lives was revealed, and the purposefully messier timeline generated suspense and drama. How did the Baudelaires get into *that* situation? You'll find out—at some point.

The advice that Dr. Hovet gave me is in line with Hutcheon's idea of the transmediation that occurs when adapting literature. She writes:

The separate units of the story (or the fabula) can also be transmediated—just as they can be summarized in digest versions or translated into another language. But they may well change—often radically—in the process of adaptation, and not only (but most obviously) in terms of their plot ordering. Pacing can be transformed, time compressed or expanded. Shifts in the focalization or point of view of the adapted story may lead to major differences. (Hutcheon 11)

While I didn't feel that the changes that I was making were radical or majorly different from Snicket's original works, Hutcheon's idea of transmediation does ring true for what I was doing. By cutting, pasting, and creating content based on my own whims and motivations, I was changing the work. This wasn't the pretty, cover-to-cover

adaptation of *The Bad Beginning* that I had envisioned early on in my writing process; it was something much more interesting.

## **5. The Second Step**

As work on my pilot script started to draw to a close, I began to feel the itch to write more. The adaptation process for the first episode, while sometimes difficult, had been extremely rewarding. I had gotten more familiar with Snicket's original text while creating something new. While I was happy with what I had accomplished, I wanted to do more. I wasn't ready to let the Baudelaires go—not when they had twelve other adventures I could be going on with them.

I talked to Dr. Hovet about the possibility of writing another episode. I was technically a little ahead of schedule for my original plan, and I was eager to continue working. My idea was to adapt the second book in the series, *The Reptile Room*, as the second episode. Dr. Hovet was on board with my idea of writing another episode, but suggested that I should think about adapting a later book. This would give me the opportunity to show off the structure I had created in the first episode: if I was working with a later book, I could use flashbacks and flashforwards to both recap previous events and foreshadow events to come. After discussing this, we decided that I would adapt the sixth book in the series, *The Ersatz Elevator*. With my new mission in mind, I set out on yet another journey with Violet, Klaus, and Sunny. Count Olaf, once again, was nipping at our heels, this time disguised as my new deadline.

As I began to work on the new episode, I realized how much easier I had it this time around. I had made a lot of the big adaptation decisions in the process of writing the

first episode: keeping Snicket as the narrator, incorporating flashbacks and flashforwards, building mythology that was only mentioned in passing or not mentioned at all in the books. Rather than having to go back and implement these elements in a retroactive fashion, they became a part of the immediate process. Hutcheon refers to a “double process” of adaptation, something that I realized that I was doing. She writes, “Whatever the motive, from the adapter’s perspective, adaptation is an act of appropriating or salvaging, and this is always a double process of interpreting and then creating something new” (Hutcheon 18). For me, I wasn’t just adapting *The Ersatz Elevator*. I was adapting *The Ersatz Elevator*, all the other events in the series that would appear in the episode via flashback and flashforward, the format of my own original pilot script, and whatever other references I decided to include or invoke.

I also became much more comfortable with including the elements that I wanted to incorporate, whether or not they appeared in Snicket’s original texts. In the pilot episode, I decided to include numerous references to Roman history and literature about Roman history, an area of interest that I personally find fascinating. I was also rewatching HBO’s *Rome*, at the time, so that was definitely an influence. These references are not present in Snicket’s text, but I felt they were very much in the spirit of his work—he incorporates numerous literary allusions and literary devices over the course of the series, and I felt like I could, and should, do the same. So while Klaus doesn’t read *Julius Caesar* and Olaf’s theatre troupe doesn’t plan to stage *Antony and Cleopatra* in Snicket’s book, they do so in my adaptation. Count Olaf and Violet’s wedding is heavily inspired by Mark Antony and Octavia’s wedding in the “Death Mask” episode of *Rome*.

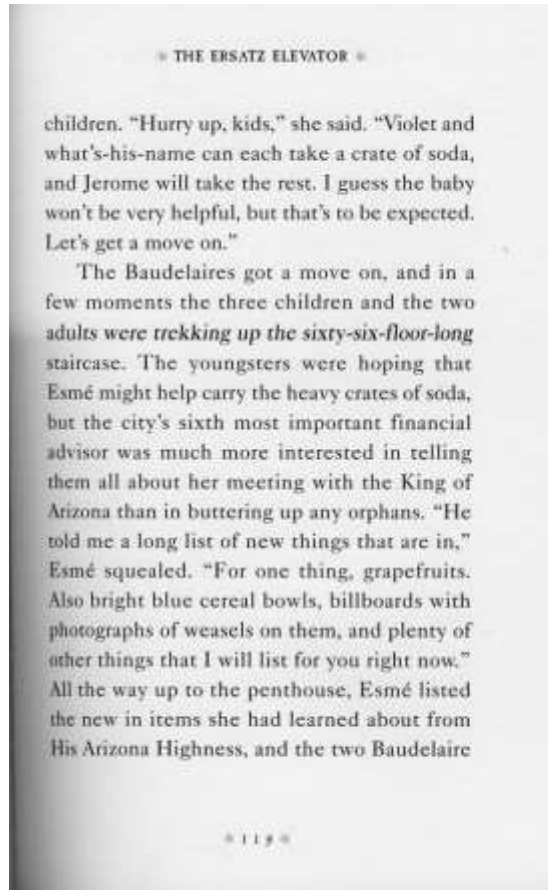


Figure 3. Left: page 119 of *The Ersatz Elevator*. Right: page 27 of “Deception!”

In the second episode I wrote, I decided to incorporate references to the works of J.D. Salinger. Two of the characters in Snicket’s sixth book, Jerome and Esmé Squalor, draw their names from Salinger and his work—Jerome is Salinger’s first name, and Esmé is the title character of his short story “For Esmé with Love and Squalor.” I decided to play along with the spirit of these references and incorporate some of my own. For instance, in a scene where Esmé tells the Baudelaire children what’s currently “in” and popular, she references *bananafish*, *high roof beams*, and *sandwiches with no mayonnaise* on them, all winking allusions to the titles of some of Salinger’s other works. Does Esmé

do so in the book? No. But I liked the idea, and had grown more confident about incorporating parts of other texts into my own work, an element of adaptation that Hutcheon also remarks on. She writes,

[A]n adaptation is an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works... the act of adaptation always involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation... adaptation is a form of intertextuality: we experience adaptations (*as adaptations*) as palimpsests through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation. (Hutcheon 7-8)

Through reinterpretation and recreation—essentially, adding my own fascinations, allusions, and references to my adaptation of a work already filled with them, I was forging ahead with something new. And I loved it.

## **6. The Fickle Format**

One question that arose from the choice of TV was exactly what format my proposed project should take. The TV industry has changed rapidly over the past few years, with the advent of streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime buying and producing original TV content. Miniseries, limited series, and event series have also increased in popularity to the point that the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences has recently split the former “Outstanding Miniseries or Movie” category into two separate ones: “Outstanding Miniseries” and “Outstanding TV Movie.” It’s not just cable networks that are in on the miniseries and limited series game anymore, either. Broadcast networks like NBC and ABC have started to play with the format as a means of risk management when it comes to new content. Because they last for a finite set of time,

miniseries and limited series are a low-risk investment, and they sometimes gain high-yield returns. And if they don't garner viewers and acclaim, miniseries and limited series can be shuttled off quickly. The rise in popularity of anthology series like *American Horror Story*, *Fargo*, and *True Detective* has also led the Academy to create further rules and regulations for which shows go in which category for the upcoming 2015 Emmy Awards.

To put it shortly, there were a lot of options for me to consider when it came to my adaptation. The closed-end nature of *A Series of Unfortunate Events* made me think that it should be a miniseries or event series broadcast by a cable network—something like HBO's miniseries events *Mildred Pierce* and *Parade's End*. While certain cable series become ratings juggernauts, like *The Walking Dead* and *Game of Thrones*, most cable networks run programs that have smaller audiences—programs like *Mad Men* and *Homeland*. Pay cable networks like HBO and Showtime and paid streaming networks like Netflix and Amazon Prime in particular don't care as much about ratings as they do about subscriber numbers. But many of these networks' series, like *Game of Thrones*, *Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad*, *House of Cards*, and *Transparent* have all gone on to garner critical admiration and awards attention, even if their audiences are smaller than the average network program. This seemed like the best fit for what I was doing.

The Baudelaire children's adventures didn't need to become a multi-season show with 24 episodes per season. With the 13 books in the series, there are 13 distinct adventures, each of which would lend themselves to adaptation as single episodes. Like other TV literary adaptations before it, my conception of the series was one that had very definite start and end points. In my mind, it was meant to be a miniseries or event series.

But someone else was also considering all these options, which I would soon come to find out.

## **7. The Unforeseen Usurper**

Nearly a year into my thesis-writing process, something unexpected occurred. I felt like the Baudelaire children do throughout Snicket's series, as Count Olaf finds them again and again.

Early in November 2014, it was announced that Netflix had acquired the rights to produce an adaptation of Snicket's works. In a press release issued by Netflix, Handler (writing as Snicket) said, "I can't believe it... After years of providing top-quality entertainment on demand, Netflix is risking its reputation and its success by associating itself with my dismaying and upsetting books" (Netflix PR).

As a fan of Snicket's works, I was absolutely thrilled. As someone currently working on my own adaptation, I didn't quite know how to feel. I knew that my adaptation wasn't going to be the one produced—as an academic exercise, it was basically written just for me. I received a lot of texts from friends who knew that I was working on my project, expressing their surprise at what had happened. My initial reaction was to post a link to the news on Facebook with the very professional comment, "V. happy but also WTF." The project that I had been toiling away on relatively quietly for a while had become a real thing, seemingly overnight.

While conflicted on how to feel, one thing became apparent to me—my idea was a good one. Even if I wasn't involved with it any way, I was excited that Snicket's works would be receiving the adaptation that they deserved.

## **8. The End**

As my thesis adventure comes to a close, I'm glad that it's an experience that I can look back on with happiness, surprise, confusion, and pride. Like the Baudelaire children's adventure, it's been a ride filled with ups and downs, highs and lows, and events both fortunate and unfortunate.



## 9. Postscript

*Dear Reader (or Viewer),*

I regret to inform you that the thesis you're holding in your hands is extremely unpleasant. It is the tale of the Baudelaire children, three wonderfully charming but terribly unlucky young people. You'd be best served by putting this down and never thinking of them again.

In the first episode alone, the three youngsters encounter a terrible fire, a scheming and hammy villain, a scrapped production of William Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, a dismal dinner, and a birdcage used for sinister purposes. In the sixth episode, they encounter a very dark place, disgusting soda, a stressful charity auction, and ocean-themed decorations.

It was my solemn duty to adapt the story of the Baudelaire children, but that does not mean it is yours to read it. You can still put this down and avoid the myriad sources of misery that the Baudelaires face. If you choose to put this down, I admire your surrender. If you choose to keep reading, I admire your bravery.

*With all due respect,*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan Pait". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ryan Pait

## CHAPTER 2

### CHARACTER LIST

## **A Series of Unfortunate Events**

Written by Ryan Pait

Based on the works of Lemony Snicket

### **Character List**

#### **LEMONY SNICKET**

##### DESCRIPTION:

Narrator of the Baudelaire children's saga. He is the brother of Jacques and Kit, and has a deep history with Mr. and Mrs. Baudelaire and the Squalors.

##### APPEARANCES:

Episodes 1-13 (narrator), various flashbacks

##### CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Jason Bateman, Benedict Cumberbatch, Peter Dinklage, Idris Elba, Dominic West

---

**VIOLET BAUDELAIRE**

## DESCRIPTION:

The eldest Baudelaire child (14) and a brilliant inventor. Violet's inventive mind allows her to come up with solutions to the children's many problems.

## ALIASES/DISGUISES:

Beverly

## APPEARANCES:

Episodes 1-13

## CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Newcomer, below 18

---

**KLAUS BAUDELAIRE**

## DESCRIPTION:

The middle Baudelaire child (12) and an avid reader. Klaus's researching and reading skills often get the children out of sticky situations.

## ALIASES/DISGUISES:

Elliot

## APPEARANCES:

Episodes 1-13

## CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Newcomer, below 16

---

**SUNNY BAUDELAIRE**

## DESCRIPTION:

The youngest Baudelaire child (2). She loves to bite things. As she grows up over the course of the series, she develops a knack for cooking.

## ALIASES/DISGUISES:

Chabo, the Wolf-Baby

## APPEARANCES:

Episodes 1-13

## CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Newcomer, below 3 (twins)

---

**MRS. BEATRICE BAUDELAIRE**

## DESCRIPTION:

Mother of the Baudelaire children. She and Mr. Baudelaire appear only in flashbacks and are always obscured so their faces are not completely visible. Has a lengthy history with the Snickets, the Squalors, and Count Olaf.

## APPEARANCES:

Various flashbacks

## CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Michelle Dockery

---

**MR. BERTRAND BAUDELAIRE**

DESCRIPTION:

Father of the Baudelaire children. He and Mrs. Baudelaire appear only in flashbacks and are always obscured so their faces are not completely visible. Also has a lengthy history with the Snickets, the Squalors, and Count Olaf.

APPEARANCES:

Various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Jon Hamm

---

**MR. ARTHUR POE**

DESCRIPTION:

Family friend of the Baudelaires and executor of the Baudelaire estate. He is a banker and makes living arrangements for the Baudelaire children. Though well-meaning, he is often incompetent.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 1-7, 11-12, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Hugh Bonneville, Stephen Colbert, Laurence Fishburne, Mark Gatiss, Rupert Graves, Kyle MacLachlan, Bob Odenkirk, Wendell Pierce

---

## **JUSTICE STRAUSS**

### **DESCRIPTION:**

Neighbor of Count Olaf. She works as a judge on the City High Court and befriends the Baudelaires while they live with Count Olaf. She comes to care very much for the Baudelaire children.

### **APPEARANCES:**

Episodes 1, 12, various flashbacks

### **CASTING SUGGESTIONS:**

Connie Britton, Patricia Clarkson, Viola Davis, Michelle Fairley, Sakina Jaffrey, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Elizabeth Marvel, Elizabeth McGovern, Molly Parker, Parker Posey, Queen Latifah, Sonja Sohn, Emma Thompson, Alfre Woodard

---

## **COUNT OLAF**

### **DESCRIPTION:**

Primary antagonist of the series. An actor and master of disguise, he concocts numerous schemes in order to obtain the Baudelaire fortune. Olaf is often a ham, but has flashes of true villainy.

### **ALIASES/DISGUISES:**

Stephano, Captain Sham, Shirley, Coach Genghis, Gunther, Detective Dupin, Mattathias

### **APPEARANCES:**

Episodes 1-13, various flashbacks

### **CASTING SUGGESTIONS:**

Benedict Cumberbatch, Will Ferrell, Bill Hader, John Hawkes,  
Oscar Isaac, Mads Mikkelsen, Pedro Pascal, James Purefoy, Corey  
Stoll

---

**FERNALD, THE HOOK-HANDED MAN**

DESCRIPTION:

Member of Olaf's theatre troupe. He has hooks for hands and helps  
Olaf in his various schemes. It is later revealed that he is the  
stepson of Captain Widdershins and stepbrother to Fiona  
Widdershins.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 1, 2, 6, 8-11, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Rob James-Collier, Mackenzie Crook, Mike O'Brien, Danny Pudi,  
Timothy Simons

---

**CYRANO, THE BALD MAN WITH THE LONG NOSE**

AGE:

DESCRIPTION:

Member of Olaf's theatre troupe. He is bald and has a long nose.  
Helps Olaf in his various schemes.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 1, 4, 8, 9, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Lee Arenberg, Jonathan Banks, Rory McCann

---

### **ORLANDO, THE PERSON WHO LOOKS LIKE NEITHER A MAN NOR A WOMAN**

#### **DESCRIPTION:**

Member of Olaf's theatre troupe. He or she is massive and rarely speaks. Helps Olaf in his various schemes. Can be played by a man or a woman.

#### **APPEARANCES:**

Episodes 1, 3, 8, various flashbacks

#### **CASTING SUGGESTIONS:**

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### **STELLA AND BLANCHE, THE WHITE-FACED WOMEN**

#### **DESCRIPTION:**

Members of Olaf's theatre troupe. They wear a lot of white powder on their faces and help Olaf in his various schemes.

#### **APPEARANCES:**

Episodes 1, 5, 8-10, various flashbacks

#### **CASTING SUGGESTIONS:**

Yvette Nicole Brown and Retta, Aidy Bryant and Kate McKinnon, Abbi Jacobson and Ilana Glazer, Teyonah Parris and Sola Bamis, Aubrey Plaza and Rashida Jones, Gabourey Sidibe and Jamie Brewer, Phyllis Smith and Angela Kinsey

---

### **UNCLE MONTGOMERY "MONTY" MONTGOMERY**

#### **DESCRIPTION:**



A distant relative of the Baudelaires and their second guardian. He is an esteemed herpetologist who truly cares for the Baudelaires.

APPEARANCES:

Episode 2, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Jim Broadbent, Hannibal Buress, Steve Carell, Liam Cunningham, Zach Galifianakis, Kevin McKidd, Ray Stevenson, Stanley Tucci, Matt Walsh

---

**BRUCE**

DESCRIPTION:

Buyer of Uncle Monty's reptile collection. He later reappears as the leader of the Snow Scouts.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 2, 10

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Mark Addy, Dean Norris, Oliver Platt

---

**AUNT JOSEPHINE ANWHISTLE**

DESCRIPTION:

Grammarian and distant aunt of the Baudelaire children. She is kind, but her irrational fears prevent her from being a good guardian to the children.

APPEARANCES:

Episode 3, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Frances Conroy, Laura Dern, Rachel Dratch, Lindsay Duncan,  
Kathryn Hahn, Allison Janney, Phyllis Logan, Una Stubbs, Jacki  
Weaver, Penelope Wilton

---

**PHIL**

DESCRIPTION:

Worker at Lucky Smells Lumbermill. He befriends the Baudelaires  
when they are employed at the lumbermill. He later reappears as a  
cook on the submarine, *The Queequeg*.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 4, 11

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

John Bradley, Michael Cera, Charlie Day, Aaron Paul, Sam  
Richardson

---

**SIR**

DESCRIPTION:

Owner of Lucky Smells Lumbermill. He is the Baudelaire children's  
fourth guardian, but does not particularly care about them. His  
face is constantly obscured by cigar smoke.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 4, 12

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Jason Alexander, Danny DeVito, Kevin Dunn

---

**CHARLES**

## DESCRIPTION:

Sir's business partner at Lucky Smells. He is kind to the Baudelaires, but not particularly helpful.

## APPEARANCES:

Episodes 4, 12

## CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Glenn Howerton, Rob McElhenney, Zach Woods

---

**DOCTOR GEORGINA ORWELL**

## DESCRIPTION:

A local optometrist in Paltryville. She is in league with Count Olaf in an attempt to steal the Baudelaire fortune.

## APPEARANCES:

Episode 4, various flashbacks

## CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Amanda Abbington, Connie Britton, Kim Dickens, Mary Elizabeth Ellis, Mindy Kaling, Paula Malcomson, Hettienne Park, Robin Weigert

---

**CARMELITA SPATS**

## DESCRIPTION:

Student at Prufrock Preparatory School. She bullies the Baudelaire children when they attend school there. She reappears

as a member of the Snow Scouts and is later unofficially adopted by Count Olaf and Esmé.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 5, 10-12, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Isabelle Fuhrman, Joey King, Kiernan Shipka, Amandla Stenberg, Maisie Williams

---

**DUNCAN AND ISADORA QUAGMIRE**

DESCRIPTION:

Students at Prufrock Preparatory School. They are triplets, but their brother Quigley died in a fire along with their parents. They quickly befriend the Baudelaires when they learn that they are orphans too. They are kidnapped by Olaf and the Baudelaires make it their mission to find them.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 5-7, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Newcomers, below 18 (triplets)

---

**VICE PRINCIPAL NERO**

DESCRIPTION:

Vice principal of Prufrock Preparatory School. He is a poor violin player and is petulant toward the Baudelaires.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 5, 12, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Fred Armisen, David Cross, Will Ferrell, John Malkovich, Jason Mantzoukas, Tracy Morgan, John C. Reilly, James Spader

---

**MR. REMORA**

DESCRIPTION:

Violet's teacher at Prufrock Preparatory School. He is constantly eating bananas.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 5, 12

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Ben Falcone, Will Forte, Jim O'Heir, Chris Parnell

---

**MRS. BASS**

DESCRIPTION:

Klaus's teacher at Prufrock Preparatory School. She is obsessed with the metric system.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 5, 12

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Carrie Brownstein, Geri Jewell, Rhea Perlman, Michaela Watkins, Meritt Wever

---

**ESMÉ GIGI GENEVIEVE SQUALOR**

DESCRIPTION:

Guardian of the Baudelaires and wife of Jerome. She is obsessed with what's "in." She later leaves Jerome and joins Count Olaf in his schemes and becomes his girlfriend. She has a deep history with Mrs. Baudelaire and the Snicketts.

ALIASES/DISGUISES:

Officer Luciana

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 6-12, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Linda Cardellini, Tina Fey, Judy Greer, Taraji P. Henson, January Jones, Yunjin Kim, Jane Krakowski, Melissa McCarthy, Kaitlin Olson, Amy Poehler, Krysten Ritter, Indira Varma, Kerry Washington, Kristen Wiig, Constance Wu

---

**JEROME SQUALOR**

DESCRIPTION:

Guardian of the Baudelaires and husband of Esmé. He cares for the Baudelaires, but his unwillingness to be confrontational means that he often fails them.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 6, 12, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Andy Buckley, Kyle Chandler, Max Greenfield, Daniel Dae Kim, Jack McBrayer, Aaron Staton

---

**MRS. MORROW**

## DESCRIPTION:

Elder in the Village of Fowl Devotees. She does not care for the Baudelaires.

## APPEARANCES:

Episodes 7, 12

## CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Talia Balsam, Linda Purl, Diana Rigg, Jessica Walter

---

**MR. LESKO**

## DESCRIPTION:

Elder in the Village of Fowl Devotees. He does not care for the Baudelaires.

## APPEARANCES:

Episodes 7, 12

## CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Ken Howard, Ron Howard, John Slattery, Jeffrey Tambor

---

**HECTOR**

## DESCRIPTION:

Guardian of the Baudelaires in the Village of Fowl Devotees. He cares greatly for the children and even enlists their help in breaking the strict rules of the village.

APPEARANCES:

Episode 7, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Ben Feldman, Martin Freeman, Tony Hale, Colin Hanks, Allen Leech,  
Ray McKinnon, Corey Stoll

---

**GERALDINE JULIENNE**

DESCRIPTION:

A reporter for the newspaper The Daily Punctilio. She inaccurately reports information and is the cause of many of the Baudelaires' troubles.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 7-9, 12

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Vanessa Bayer, Lara Jean Chorostecki, Mo Collins, Kim Dickens,  
Leslie Jones, Lyndsey Marshal, Artemis Pebdani, Kristen Schaal,  
Liza Weil, Vanessa L. Williams

---

**JACQUES SNICKET**

DESCRIPTION:

Brother to Kit and Lemony. He appears in the Village of Fowl Devotees and is believed to be Count Olaf, but the children know better and try to set him free. It is later revealed that he is a friend of Quigley Quagmire.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 7, 10, various flashbacks



CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Hugh Dancy, Dan Stevens, Mike Vogel

---

**BABS**

DESCRIPTION:

Head of Human Resources at Heimlich Hospital. She is never seen: she is only heard over an intercom.

APPEARANCES:

Episode 8

---

**HAL**

DESCRIPTION:

Librarian of records at Heimlich Hospital. He is old and has bad eyesight. He quickly befriends the Baudelaires when they begin volunteering at the hospital.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 8, 12, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Reg E. Cathey, Brad Dourif, Iain Glen, Julian Glover, Ian McElhinney, Clarke Peters, Donald Sumpter, Peter Vaughan

---

**MADAME LULU/OLIVIA CALIBAN**

DESCRIPTION:

Fortuneteller and boss of Caligari Carnival. She turns out to be a fraud, but promises to help the Baudelaires.

APPEARANCES:

Episode 9, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Laura Carmichael, Emilia Clarke, Kerry Condon, Natalie Dormer,  
Nathalie Emmanuel, America Ferrera, Jemima Kirke, Kate Mara, Maya  
Rudolph, Indira Varma, Lotte Verbeek

---

**HUGO, THE HUNCHBACK**

DESCRIPTION:

Member of Caligari Carnival's freak show. He befriends the  
Baudelaires while they are in disguise. He, Colette, and Kevin  
later become members of Count Olaf's troupe.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 9-12

---

**COLETTE, THE CONTORTIONIST**

DESCRIPTION:

Member of Caligari Carnival's freak show. She befriends the  
Baudelaires while they are in disguise. She, Hugo, and Kevin  
later become members of Count Olaf's troupe.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 9-12

---

**KEVIN, THE AMBIDEXTROUS MAN**

DESCRIPTION:

Member of Caligari Carnival's freak show. He befriends the  
Baudelaires while they are in disguise. He, Colette, and Hugo  
later become members of Count Olaf's troupe.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 9-12

---

**QUIGLEY QUAGMIRE**

DESCRIPTION:

The third Quagmire triplet. Previously thought to be deceased, he meets Violet and Klaus when they are disguised in the Snow Scouts. He and Violet develop feelings for each other.

APPEARANCES:

Episode 10, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Newcomer (Triplets)

---

**THE MAN WITH A BEARD BUT NO HAIR & THE WOMAN WITH HAIR BUT NO BEARD**

DESCRIPTION:

Villainous members of V.F.D. Count Olaf seems to report to them, and they concoct even more villainous schemes than he does.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 10, 12, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Bryan Cranston and Anna Gunn, Alan Cumming and Lisa Kudrow, Stephen Dillane and Carice van Houten, David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson, Aiden Gillen and Lena Headey, Conleth Hill and Polly Walker, Jason Isaacs and Helen McCrory, John Slattery and Christina Hendricks, Kevin Spacey and Robin Wright

---

**CAPTAIN WIDDERSHINS**

## DESCRIPTION:

Captain of *The Queequeg*. He is extremely enthusiastic and eagerly welcomes the Baudelaires to his crew.

## APPEARANCES:

Episode 11, various flashbacks

## CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Jim Broadbent, Alfred Molina, Ian McShane, Kevin McNally, Robert Morse

---

**FIONA WIDDERSHINS**

## DESCRIPTION:

Daughter of Captain Widdershins. She is a mycologist. While working with the Baudelaires, she develops feelings for Klaus.

## APPEARANCES:

Episode 11, various flashbacks

## CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Newcomer, below 18

---

**KIT SNICKET**

## DESCRIPTION:

Sister to Jacques and Klaus. She befriends and helps the Baudelaires. She also enlists them with a mission from V.F.D. She

is pregnant with Dewey Denouement's baby. She has a history with the Baudelaires and the Squalors.

APPEARANCES:

Episodes 11-13, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Anna Chlumsky, Vera Farmiga, Eva Green, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Melanie Lynskey, Elisabeth Moss, Amy Ryan, Allison Tolman, Kristen Wiig, Ruth Wilson

---

**FRANK, ERNEST, AND DEWEY DENOUEMENT**

DESCRIPTION:

Managers of the Hotel Denouement. Frank is noble, Ernest is villainous, and Dewey is noble, and all three are identical. Dewey has a relationship with Kit Snicket. One actor should play all three parts.

APPEARANCES:

Episode 12, various flashbacks

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Chris O'Dowd, Chris Pratt, Adam Scott

---

**FRIDAY CALIBAN**

DESCRIPTION:

Colonist on the mysterious island. She befriends the Baudelaires and banishes Count Olaf from the island.

APPEARANCES:

Episode 13

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Olivia Cooke, Taissa Farmiga, Sophie Turner

---

**ISHMAEL**

DESCRIPTION:

Facilitator of the mysterious island. Rules the island through peer pressure and complacency of the islanders. He/she claims to be unable to walk. He/she knew Mr. and Mrs. Baudelaire. Can be played by a man or a woman.

APPEARANCES:

Episode 13

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

F. Murray Abraham, Charles Dance, Jared Harris, Jessica Lange, Helen Mirren, Lance Reddick, Billy Bob Thornton

---

**BEATRICE SNICKET**

DESCRIPTION:

Daughter of Kit Snicket and Dewey Denouement. The Baudelaires raise her on the mysterious island.

APPEARANCES:

Episode 13

CASTING SUGGESTIONS:

Newcomer, infant

## CHAPTER 3

### SERIES OUTLINE

# **A Series of Unfortunate Events**

Written by Ryan Pait

Based on the works of Lemony Snicket

## **Series Outline**

### **Part I:**

1. "Orphans!"
2. "Murder!"
3. "Disappearance!"
4. "Hypnosis!"
5. "Kidnapping!"
6. "Deception!"
7. "Prisoners!"

## **Part II:**

8. "Surgery!"
  9. "Freaks!"
  10. "Hostages!"
  11. "Poison!"
  12. "Espionage!"
  13. "Shipwrecked!"
- 

## **Part I**

### **Episode 1 - "Orphans!"**

Based on *The Bad Beginning* by Lemony Snicket

#### Synopsis:

The Baudelaire children—Violet, Klaus, and Sunny—become the Baudelaire orphans when their parents die in a mysterious fire that consumes their home and everything they have ever known. Their affairs are to be handled by Mr. Poe, a family friend and the executor of their parents' estate. Mr. Poe



sends the children to live with their distant relative, Count Olaf, who earns his living as an actor. Olaf makes a bad first impression, but the Baudelaires decide to stick it out and give him another chance. The children soon realize that their guardian and his acting troupe are truly despicable, but they find solace in Olaf's kindly neighbor, Justice Strauss. The children discover Olaf's nefarious scheme to steal away their inheritance, which involves him marrying Violet. Unable to convince Mister Poe of Olaf's treachery, they must use their considerable talents to find their own way to stop him.

#### Character List:

Lemony Snicket (narrator); Violet Baudelaire; Klaus Baudelaire; Sunny Baudelaire; Mr. Poe; Justice Strauss; Count Olaf; Fernald; Cyrano; Orlando; Stella; Blanche

---

#### **Episode 2 - "Murder!"**

Based on *The Reptile Room* by Lemony Snicket

#### Synopsis:

After escaping Count Olaf and his nefarious marriage plot, the Baudelaire children go to live with their uncle, Montgomery Montgomery, an esteemed herpetologist. The children bond quickly with Uncle Monty, who genuinely appreciates the children and their unique talents. Uncle Monty plans an exciting Peruvian adventure for himself, his reptiles, the children, and his new assistant, Stephano. Unbeknownst to Uncle Monty, Stephano is Count Olaf in disguise, whom the children recognize immediately. As the Baudelaires try to make Olaf's true identity clear to their new guardian, tragedy strikes, and the children must work out a way to escape Olaf's clutches once again before he whisks them away to Peru.

#### Character List:

Lemony Snicket (narrator); Violet Baudelaire; Klaus Baudelaire; Sunny Baudelaire; Mr. Poe; Uncle Monty; Count Olaf (disguised as Stephano); Fernald

---

### **Episode 3 - "Disappearance!"**

Based on *The Wide Window* by Lemony Snicket

#### Synopsis:

The Baudelaire children travel to Lake Lachrymose to live with their Aunt Josephine, a well-meaning but extremely timid woman. As the children settle into their new life with their panicky and grammar-loving guardian, they encounter Count Olaf once again, this time disguised as the seafaring, peg-legged Captain Sham. Aunt Josephine becomes smitten with Captain Sham, oblivious to the fact that he is Count Olaf. Aunt Josephine mysteriously disappears, leaving behind only a grammatically incorrect suicide note that cedes custody of the children to Captain Sham. As a hurricane descends on Lake Lachrymose, the Baudelaires must overcome forces both human and natural in order to find out what happened to Aunt Josephine and bring Olaf to justice once more.

#### Character List:

Lemony Snicket (narrator); Violet Baudelaire; Klaus

Baudelaire; Sunny Baudelaire; Mr. Poe; Aunt Josephine;  
Count Olaf (disguised as Captain Sham); Orlando

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#### **Episode 4 - "Hypnosis!"**

Based on *The Miserable Mill* by Lemony Snicket

Mr. Poe takes the Baudelaire children to the Lucky Smells Lumbermill, where they will be cared for by Sir, the mill's grumpy owner. Sir will attempt to keep Count Olaf away from the children and their fortune, but only if the children work at the mill. The children are miserable in their jobs at the mill, but are grateful that Count Olaf has not found them. When an accident sends Klaus to the local optometrist, the enigmatic Dr. Georgina Orwell, the children encounter Olaf once again—this time disguised as Shirley, a receptionist. The children discover that Orwell and Shirley are in league to obtain their fortune and must overcome their combined perfidious forces.

Character List:

Lemony Snicket (narrator); Violet Baudelaire; Klaus

Baudelaire; Sunny Baudelaire; Mr. Poe; Phil; Sir; Charles;  
Georgina Orwell; Count Olaf (disguised as Shirley); Cyrano

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## **Episode 5 - "Kidnapping!"**

Based on *The Austere Academy* by Lemony Snicket

Synopsis:

Mr. Poe enrolls the Baudelaire children at Prufrock Preparatory School, where he hopes they will be able to avoid Count Olaf. Prufrock is run by the draconian Vice Principal Nero, who does everything in his power to make the Baudelaires miserable while promising to keep Olaf at bay. Despite their troubles, the children befriend the Quagmire triplets, Isadora and Duncan, who lost their brother and parents in a fire similar to the one that claimed the Baudelaire parents. The Quagmires also tell the Baudelaires about the cryptic V.F.D., an organization they believe Olaf may be connected with. Misfortune strikes when Count Olaf arrives at Prufrock, this time disguised as Coach Genghis. He has devised an exhaustive scheme to obtain both the Baudelaire and Quagmire fortunes, and the

children and their new friends must work out a way to defeat him.

Character List:

Lemony Snicket (narrator); Violet Baudelaire; Klaus Baudelaire; Sunny Baudelaire; Mr. Poe; Carmelita Spats; Vice Principal Nero; Mr. Remora; Mrs. Bass; Duncan Quagmire; Isadora Quagmire; Count Olaf (disguised as Coach Genghis); Stella; Blanche

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**Episode 6 - "Deception!"**

Based on *The Ersatz Elevator* by Lemony Snicket

Synopsis:

Troubled by the kidnapping of their friends the Quagmire triplets, the Baudelaire children return to the city to live with their new guardians, the wealthy Jerome and Esmé Squalor. Jerome is well-meaning and inviting, while Esmé seems more concerned with what's fashionable than with the children's welfare. Nevertheless, the children find comfort in their new home until Count Olaf strikes again, this time

disguised as a chic auctioneer named Gunther. The children try to reveal Gunther's true identity to Jerome and Esmé, but the two are unconvinced. As they try to outwit Gunther and figure out his scheme, they encounter the captive Quagmire triplets. They also learn that one of their guardians is not who he or she seems to be. The children must find a way to expose Gunther and free the Quagmires, all while trying to save their own lives and unravel the ever-deepening mystery of V.F.D.

Character List:

Lemony Snicket (narrator); Violet Baudelaire; Klaus Baudelaire; Sunny Baudelaire; Mr. Poe; Jerome Squalor; Esmé Squalor; Count Olaf (disguised as Gunther); Fernald; Duncan Quagmire; Isadora Quagmire

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## **Episode 7 - "Prisoners!"**

Based on *The Vile Village* by Lemony Snicket

### Synopsis:

The Baudelaire children arrive at the Village of Fowl Devotees, convinced that it may help them solve the riddle of V.F.D. The children are to be cared for by the entire village, which is filled with crows and crabby citizens who live by very restrictive rules. The children find consolation in Hector, the town handyman, who they live with on the outskirts of town. The Baudelaires begin receiving mysterious couplets in the style of their friend Isadora Quagmire, and are thrilled when they learn that Count Olaf has been captured. The captured man turns out to be Jacques Snicket, who looks similar to Olaf, and the children attempt to rescue him. As always, Olaf appears, this time disguised as Detective Dupin, and tragedy strikes. The Baudelaires soon find themselves imprisoned for a crime they did not commit and must race to prove their innocence while trying to solve the mystery of the Quagmires' whereabouts.



Character List:

Lemony Snicket (narrator); Violet Baudelaire; Klaus  
Baudelaire; Sunny Baudelaire; Mr. Poe; Mrs. Morrow; Mr.  
Lesko; Hector; Jacques Snicket; Geraldine Julienne; Esmé  
Squalor (disguised as Officer Luciana); Count Olaf  
(disguised as Detective Dupin); Duncan Quagmire; Isadora  
Quagmire

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## **Part II**

### **Episode 8 - "Surgery!"**

Based on *The Hostile Hospital* by Lemony Snicket

Synopsis:

After being falsely framed for murder, the Baudelaire children take their fate into their own hands and go on the run from the law and Count Olaf. After an unsuccessful attempt to contact Mr. Poe, the children fall in with the Volunteers Fighting Disease, who work at Heimlich Hospital. The Baudelaires make the hospital their new workplace and home, and they befriend Hal, the hospital's ancient librarian of records. They learn of the existence of the Snicket File, which contains information about their parents, the Snicket family, and V.F.D. As the children try to learn more about the mysterious organization and discover a secret about their parents, Count Olaf arrives at the hospital, this time disguised as Mattathias. Olaf has prepared his most sinister scheme yet—one that involves crude and unnecessary surgery in an attempt to obtain the Baudelaire fortune. When Violet becomes separated from

Klaus and Sunny, the youngest Baudelaires must use all of their skills to save their sister's life.

Character List:

Lemony Snicket (narrator); Violet Baudelaire; Klaus Baudelaire; Sunny Baudelaire; Hal; Esmé Squalor; Count Olaf (disguised as Mattathias); Fernald; Cyrano; Orlando; Stella; Blanche

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## **Episode 9 - "Freaks!"**

Based on *The Carnivorous Carnival* by Lemony Snicket

Synopsis:

The Baudelaires escape from Heimlich Hospital in the trunk of Count Olaf's car, unbeknownst to him. They learn that Olaf and his troupe are headed to Caligari Carnival, where Olaf plans to meet with the mystical Madame Lulu to learn more about the Snicket File. The children take a page from Olaf's book and disguise themselves in order to work in the carnival's freak show while spying on Olaf and his associates. While snooping on Olaf, the children learn that

one of their parents may be alive and well at the V.F.D. headquarters. They decide to approach Lulu on their own. Olaf and Lulu bring lions to the carnival to attract more customers, and the Baudelaires' plans fall apart when calamity strikes. Still in disguise, the children depart the carnival with Olaf and his associates, and pretend to be in his employ in order to reach the V.F.D. headquarters in the Mortmain Mountains. Olaf proves to be one step ahead of the children and manages to separate them, leaving Sunny in his clutches and Violet and Klaus in imminent danger.

#### Character List:

Lemony Snicket (narrator); Violet Baudelaire (disguised as Beverly); Klaus Baudelaire (disguised as Elliot); Sunny Baudelaire (disguised as Chabo, the Wolf Baby); Esmé Squalor; Count Olaf; Fernald; Cyrano; Stella; Blanche; Hugo the Hunchback; Colette the Contortionist; Kevin the Ambidextrous Man; Madame Lulu; Geraldine Julienne

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## **Episode 10 - "Hostages!"**

Based on *The Slippery Slope* by Lemony Snicket

### Synopsis:

Violet and Klaus scramble to save themselves, and decide to trek on foot to the V.F.D. headquarters in the Mortmain Mountains to recover Sunny. They encounter the Snow Scouts, a ridiculous group of youngsters who are also hiking up to the mountains' peak, Mount Fraught. The two are reunited with someone they hoped to never see again—Carmelita Spats—and befriend someone they previously thought dead—Quigley Quagmire. Their new friend helps them reach the V.F.D. headquarters, where they try to decode a cryptic message. They also discover that V.F.D. underwent a schism, leaving members turned against one another. Sunny, still in the clutches of Count Olaf, uses her time to eavesdrop on Olaf and his troupe, and learns some very important information. Violet, Klaus, and Quigley devise a scheme to get Sunny back, but they are afraid it may be too wicked. Sunny is introduced to two villains even more frightening than Olaf, and the two groups converge as False Spring arrives. In the

ensuing chaos, the world comes crashing down and the Baudelaires find themselves swept out to sea.

Character List:

Lemony Snicket (narrator); Violet Baudelaire; Klaus Baudelaire; Sunny Baudelaire; Esmé Squalor; Count Olaf; Fernald; Stella; Blanche; Hugo the Hunchback; Colette the Contortionist; Kevin the Ambidextrous Man; Bruce; Carmelita Spats; Quigley Quagmire; Jacques Snicket (flashback only); The Man with a Beard but no Hair; The Woman with Hair but no Beard

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**Episode 11 - "Poison!"**

Based on *The Grim Grotto* by Lemony Snicket

Synopsis:

Separated from their friend Quigley, the Baudelaires float away from the wreckage of the V.F.D. headquarters and out to sea. Unsure of what to do next, they encounter the *Queequeg*, a submarine manned by the effervescent Captain Widdershins, his young daughter, Fiona, and Phil, who

worked at Lucky Smells Lumbermill with the children.

Widdershins and his crew are searching for the mysterious sugar bowl, which contains an important secret regarding V.F.D. Count Olaf is looking for the sugar bowl as well.

The Baudelaires decide to join Widdershins and his crew and assist in the search, which leads them to the Gorgonian Grotto. While there, the children and Fiona encounter Medusoid mycelium, a deadly fungus. Unable to find the sugar bowl, the children return to the *Queequeg*, only to find that Widdershins and Phil have disappeared and that Sunny has been poisoned from the Medusoid Mycelium. As the children scramble to find an antidote, Count Olaf arrives in his own submarine and takes the children hostage. Violet and Klaus race to save Sunny's life and decode a message from Quigley. This leads them back to Briny Beach, where all their troubles began. There they encounter Mr. Poe and Kit Snicket, sister of the murdered Jacques, and once again must decide who to trust.

#### Character List:

Lemony Snicket (narrator); Violet Baudelaire; Klaus Baudelaire; Sunny Baudelaire; Captain Widdershins; Fiona

Widdershins; Phil; Esmé Squalor; Count Olaf; Fernald; Hugo  
the Hunchback; Colette the Contortionist; Kevin the  
Ambidextrous Man; Carmelita Spats; Mr. Poe; Kit Snicket

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## **Episode 12 - "Espionage!"**

Based on *The Penultimate Peril* by Lemony Snicket

The Baudelaires decide to put their trust in Kit Snicket, a noble member of V.F.D. She enlists the Baudelaires in an espionage mission to obtain the mysterious sugar bowl, which will supposedly arrive at the Hotel Denouement. The Baudelaires disguise themselves as hotel concierges with the help of Kit, who promises to meet up with the children later. The Hotel Denouement is also "the last safe place" for members of V.F.D., who will be converging at the hotel on Thursday. The Baudelaires meet the hotel's managers, Frank and Ernest, who appear to be identical twins. Kit warned the children to trust one and not the other, and the Baudelaires struggle once again to decide who to place their faith in. Through their concierge duties, the children are reunited with many figures from their past and



are given duties to perform that might be wicked or noble. The Baudelaires also learn a secret about the Hotel Denouement that changes their entire perception of it. The children are reunited with Justice Strauss and Jerome Squalor, who tell the children a trial will be held on Thursday to condemn Count Olaf and the other villainous V.F.D. members. As chaos and confusion set in once again, the Baudelaires are forced to make their toughest moral decision yet—one that puts them in the same boat as Olaf.

#### Character List:

Lemony Snicket (narrator); Violet Baudelaire; Klaus Baudelaire; Sunny Baudelaire; Kit Snicket; Frank Denouement; Ernest Denouement; Esmé Squalor; Count Olaf; Hugo the Hunchback; Colette the Contortionist; Kevin the Ambidextrous Man; Carmelita Spats; Sir; Charles; Vice Principal Nero; Mr. Remora; Mrs. Bass; Hal; Dewey Denouement; Justice Strauss; Jerome Squalor; Mr. Poe; Geraldine Julienne; Mrs. Morrow; Mr. Lesko; The Man with a Beard but no Hair; The Woman with Hair but no Beard

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### **Episode 13 - "Shipwrecked!"**

Based on *The End* by Lemony Snicket

The Baudelaires and Count Olaf escape the Hotel Denouement in *The Carmelita*, a small sailing ship. After surviving a maelstrom, they wash up on the coastal shelf of an island. The Baudelaires and Olaf are introduced to Friday, a young girl who lives on the island. She invites them to join her and the other islanders, but when Olaf threatens Friday, she banishes him. On the island, the Baudelaires meet the other inhabitants, who have all ended up on the island in a similar manner to the Baudelaires. They are also introduced to Ishmael, the island's facilitator, who has injured his feet and is largely immobile. He promises to protect the Baudelaires from Olaf if they agree to follow the rules of the island. Life on the island is dull, but the Baudelaires come to prefer it to their previously tumultuous lives. They grow somewhat suspicious of Ishmael, who says he won't force anyone to do anything. It soon becomes apparent that his suggestions largely go unquestioned, however. Another storm brings a new wave of detritus to the island, this time containing the very pregnant Kit Snicket and the

Incredibly Deadly Viper, a snake that once belonged to Uncle Monty. The children also learn of two plots being hatched on the island: Count Olaf plans to unleash the Medusoid mycelium in order to take control of the island, and a small group of islanders plans to mutiny against Ishmael. As the two plots come to a head, the children are forced to make their toughest decisions yet. Events are also complicated when they discover Ishmael's true nature and previously unknown information about their parents. As the Baudelaires' past and present collide, they must decide what turn their lives will take as their unfortunate journey comes to an end.

#### Character List:

Lemony Snicket (narrator); Violet Baudelaire; Klaus Baudelaire; Sunny Baudelaire; Kit Snicket; Count Olaf; Friday Caliban; Ishmael; Beatrice Snicket

## CHAPTER 4

### PRODUCTION NOTES

# **A Series of Unfortunate Events**

## **Production Notes**

### Series Structure

I suggest splitting the series into two parts. While the narrative structure of most of the books is the same, after book seven, the storytelling format changes. In the first seven books, the Baudelaires are cared for by a variety of guardians. But with the resolution of book 7, the children are on the run from the law. In books 8-13, the children are left to fend for themselves. By breaking the television series into two parts, one of which covers the events of books 1-7 and one that covers the events of books 8-13, there can be a clear distinction between these two phases of the Baudelaire children's journey.

This split would also allow interest and excitement for the series to be spread out over a longer period of time. Because the narrative has a definite endpoint, a split in

the middle would be a good way to increase the show's longevity. This would also make the show eligible for two different awards seasons.

Splitting the series into two parts would also allow for a production break. An important part of the series is that the children age over the course of it: Klaus and Violet both celebrate birthdays, and Sunny begins walking on her own at the conclusion of book 7, stating that she isn't a baby anymore.

My recommendation would be a 6-month production break. This would allow the cast and crew time off to work on other projects as well as time for the actors playing the children to age a little.

#### Time Period

Snicket's books take place in an unspecified time period, but it's one with obvious late Victorian and Gothic influences. The use of anachronistic elements (such as computers and elevators) also keep the time period vague.

I would recommend the same for the show—a sort of neo-Victorian look, but with anachronistic elements. The

previous film adaptation used constructed sets and green screen locations to achieve this same sort of look instead of using real locations. One of the strongest elements of the movie is its visual style, so I would recommend looking to that for inspiration.

### Casting

The timeless universe of the series also allows for a lot of diversity in casting performers. Most—if not all—of the roles in the series can be played by actors and actresses of any race or ethnicity. I have offered many different options in the casting suggestion sections of the character list. I think this adds more interest to the world of the show and would contribute to the timeless feel of it as well. Both males and females can play some roles, such as Orlando and Ishmael. These roles have been noted in the character list.

I also suggest casting unknowns for the majority of the younger roles, mainly the Baudelaire children and the Quagmire triplets. Having actors and actresses that are unknown quantities is exciting, and discovering new talent

is important. This would also be balanced by the fact that seasoned performers are playing most of the adult roles. The Baudelaire children carry the show from beginning to end, so casting new talent that the audience has no pre-conceived notions of could make that journey a little more exciting.

In terms of the ages of the younger performers, I would suggest trying to stay as close as possible to the ages of the characters. This isn't a sexy teen drama on ABC Family, so the younger characters don't have to be excessively glamorous. For production purposes, I would suggest casting twins to play Sunny (as was done for the movie) and actual identical triplets to play the Quagmires.

A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS

"Orphans!"

Written by

Ryan Pait

Based on the works of

Lemony Snicket



FADE IN:

COLD OPEN

EXT. BAUDELAIRE MANSION - DAY

The BAUDELAIRE MANSION is engulfed in FLAMES; SMOKE rises toward the sky.

FIREFIGHTERS surround it, trying to control the blaze.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
Dear viewer, if you are interested in a story with a happy ending, you would be better off watching something else. In this story, there is no happy ending, a rather bad beginning, and very few happy events in the middle. This is a story about three intelligent, charming, and resourceful children with pleasant facial features.

INT. BAUDELAIRE MANSION - LIBRARY - DAY - FLASHBACK

The three BAUDELAIRE CHILDREN laugh together in their parents' lavish LIBRARY.

BACK TO SCENE

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.) [CONT'D]  
Despite this, most everything that happened to them was rife with misfortune, misery, and despair. I'm sorry to tell you this, but it is simply how the story goes.

EXT. VILLAGE OF FOWL DEVOTEES - STREETS - DAY - FLASHFORWARD

The Baudelaire children run for their lives as a torch-bearing CROWD advances behind them.

BACK TO SCENE

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.) [CONT'D]  
My name is Lemony Snicket, and it is my solemn duty to tell the tale of the Baudelaire children. While it is my duty to tell their story, it isn't necessarily your duty to watch it. Their tale of woe is just about to begin, and in the worst of all places to receive bad news.

EXT. BRINY BEACH - DAY

The smoke from the Baudelaire Mansion transitions into the FOG at BRINY BEACH. We see the three children in silhouette.

VIOLET (14) steps forward. She's holding a rock in her right hand. Her hair whips around in the breeze. She pulls a RIBBON from the pocket of her dress.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
Violet Baudelaire, the eldest,  
liked to skip rocks. Like most  
14-year-olds, she was right-handed.

Violet ties her hair back with the ribbon. It's an instinct for her. She tosses the rock; it skips perfectly.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
Anyone who knew Violet well could  
tell she was thinking hard when her  
hair was tied up in a ribbon. She  
had a knack for inventing.

SERIES OF SHOTS - MOS

INT. BAUDELAIRE MANSION - VIOLET'S BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

A) Violet ties her hair back before using a blowtorch, MR. BAUDELAIRE (30s/40s) stands beside her

B) Violet uses a screwdriver

C) Violet strings two wires together--sparks fly

BACK TO SCENE

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.) [CONT'D]  
Today, she was thinking of how to  
construct a device that could  
retrieve a skipped rock.

KLAUS (12) steps forward now. He pushes his GLASSES up on his nose as he examines a hermit crab.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
Klaus Baudelaire, the middle child,  
liked to examine creatures in the  
tidepools at Briny Beach. Klaus was  
a little older than twelve and  
loved books.

SERIES OF SHOTS - MOS

3.

INT. BAUDELAIRE MANSION - LIBRARY - DAY - FLASHBACK

A) Klaus pulls a book from a high shelf in the Baudelaire library; MRS. BAUDELAIRE (30s/40s) shelves books behind him

B) Klaus sits in an overstuffed armchair, reading "Julius Caesar"

C) Klaus puts "Julius Caesar" to the side; picks up his next book

BACK TO SCENE

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.) [CONT'D]  
Despite being only 12, Klaus knew a great many things. He knew the difference between an alligator and a crocodile, he knew who killed Julius Caesar, and he knew about the creatures at Briny Beach.

Now SUNNY (2) crawls forward. She's chewing contently on a piece of driftwood with her TEETH.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
Sunny Baudelaire, the youngest, liked to bite things. Despite her young age and small size, Sunny had very sharp teeth,

SERIES OF SHOTS - MOS

INT. BAUDELAIRE MANSION - KITCHEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

A) Sunny takes the first bite out of an apple while being carried by Mrs. Baudelaire

B) Sunny chews on a building block

C) Mr. Baudelaire hands Sunny a carrot, which she bites in two with her teeth. She shrieks with delight

BACK TO SCENE

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.) [CONT'D]  
which she often put to good use. Sunny was at an age where one speaks mostly in unintelligible shrieks.

SUNNY  
Gack!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

4.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
Such as that one, which likely  
meant, "Look at that mysterious  
figure emerging from the fog!"

The Baudelaires turn their attention to the mysterious  
figure emerging from the fog.

It's MR. POE (45), a banker and family friend of the  
Baudelaires. He's well-dressed and respectable, but a little  
silly and puffed up. He coughs loudly into a handkerchief,  
doubling over, and his top hat topples to the ground.

Violet picks his top hat up and returns it to him.

KLAUS  
How do you do, Mr. Poe?

MR. POE  
Fine, thank you.

There's a pause. Mr. Poe is not great with children, even  
those he knows.

VIOLET  
It's a nice day.

Sunny makes a sound like an angry bird. Klaus picks her up.

MR. POE  
(absently)  
Yes, it is a nice day.

Mr. Poe inhales deeply, preparing to announce something big.  
The children look confused.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
This is your last chance. From this  
moment on, the tale of the  
Baudelaires becomes extremely  
unpleasant. Turn this off while you  
still can.

MR. POE  
(refocusing)  
I'm afraid I have some very bad  
news for you, children.

The children's faces go blank.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
Really, I must insist. Turn it off  
now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

5.

MR. POE  
Children, your parents have  
perished in a terrible fire.

END OF COLD OPEN

INT./EXT. BAUDELAIRE MANSION - RUINS - DAY

The Baudelaire Mansion stands, impressive and beautiful. A time lapse shows the irreparable damage the FIRE has done.

The children and Mr. Poe make their way through the ruins. Firefighters work to finish off the blaze.

The children peruse the ashes together.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
It is useless for me to describe  
how the Baudelaire children felt.  
If you have ever lost someone very  
important to you, then you already  
know how it feels. And if you  
haven't, then you cannot possibly  
imagine it.

INT. MR. POE'S CAR - DAY

Violet, Klaus, and Sunny share the back seat, looking glum. Mr. Poe drives, his top hat slightly squashed.

VIOLET  
Where will we go, Mr. Poe?

MR. POE  
Your parents' will dictates that  
you be raised in the most  
convenient way possible. Luckily,  
your cousin COUNT OLAF lives within  
the city limits.

Violet and Klaus exchange a confused glance. Sunny looks bemused.

KLAUS  
Who's Count Olaf? We've never heard  
of him.

MR. POE  
He is either your third cousin four  
times removed, or your fourth  
cousin three times removed. He is  
not your closest relative on the  
family tree, but he is the closest  
geographically.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

6.

KLAUS

That doesn't seem to make a lot of sense.

VIOLET

If he lives in the city, why haven't we met him before?

MR. POE

(slightly disgruntled)  
Perhaps because he was very busy. He's an actor by trade, and often travels around the world with different theater companies.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS - MOS

A) Count Olaf has makeup brushed onto his face (eyes closed)

B) A costume is adjusted on Count Olaf (profile)

C) Count Olaf bows in front of a crowd (silhouette)

BACK TO SCENE

MR. POE (CONT'D)

Ah!

He starts to slow the car as a pretty and charming house comes into view.

MR. POE (CONT'D)

(uncomfortably cheerful)  
Here we are. Your new home.

EXT. JUSTICE STRAUSS' HOUSE - DAY

The house is clean with nice, big windows and an assortment of well-kept greenery.

A woman, JUSTICE STRAUSS (50s), stands at the doorway. She's wearing a judge's robe. She waves.

Mr. Poe halts the car and they all exit onto the street. Justice Strauss comes forward to meet them.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Oh, hello! You must be the Baudelaires.

She extends a hand to Violet. She's warm and inviting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

7.

VIOLET

(shaking her hand)

Yes, we are. I'm Violet, and this is my brother, Klaus, and my sister, Sunny. And this is Mr. Poe, who has been arranging things for us since the death of our parents.

Everyone shakes hands and exchanges pleasantries.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Yes, I heard about the fire. I'm so sorry, I should introduce myself. My name is Justice Strauss. I work as a judge on the city High Court.

KLAUS

That's a fascinating profession. Are you married to Count Olaf?

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Goodness me, no! Heavens no. I don't know him that well, actually. He's just my next-door neighbor.

Everyone swivels to look at COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE. It's dilapidated and grimy, with a tall, leaning TOWER. It's ornately filthy.

Justice Strauss, Mr. Poe, and the Baudelaires have no idea what to say.

SUNNY

Oh!

Everyone knows exactly what she means.

VIOLET

Well it was nice to meet you, Justice Strauss.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Yes. Perhaps one day you can come over to visit. I would love that.

KLAUS

That would be very nice.

Mr. Poe tips his hat to Justice Strauss as she heads back inside.

EXT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - DAY

Mr. Poe and the children make their way to Count Olaf's front door, which has a large, ominous EYE carved into it. Mr. Poe rings the doorbell, and after a pause, the door creaks slightly open.

COUNT OLAF (O.S.)  
(from the shadows)  
Hello, hello, hello.

The front door swings all the way open. There stands Count Olaf, (30s/40s), hands on his hips. He's tall and thin, with a UNIBROW, shiny eyes, and an aura of absolute menace. He's as unkempt as his house.

COUNT OLAF  
Hello, my children. Mr. Poe, how do you do? Please wipe your feet outside, so no mud gets indoors.

Mr. Poe and the children wipe their feet and step inside.

INT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Count Olaf's request is a ridiculous one.

The house is as disgusting inside as it is outside. EYES are used as a motif everywhere. The children peer around. This is not what they're used to.

MR. POE  
The house looks like it could use a little work.

COUNT OLAF  
(smiling forcefully)  
I realize that my humble home isn't as fancy as the Baudelaire mansion, but perhaps with a bit of their money we could fix it up.

MR. POE  
(surprised)  
The children's fortune is not to be used for such matters.

COUNT OLAF  
(rounding on Mr. Poe, but when he speaks, he's restrained)  
Oh, well. It's all the same to me. Thank you very much for bringing these dear children here. I'll show them to their room now.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

9.

He picks up Sunny and pulls Violet and Klaus into a weird, four-person hug.

MR. POE

And I must get back to work.  
Goodbye, children. I hope you'll be  
happy here. You can always contact  
me at the bank if you have  
questions.

COUNT OLAF

Stupendous. Goodbye, Mr. Poe.

Mr. Poe exits and Count Olaf slams the front door behind him, then rests against it, staring at the children. There's an awkward silence.

COUNT OLAF

Follow me, children.

He shows them around the house. Every room is as filthy as the foyer.

After the tour of the ground floor, Count Olaf ascends the spiral staircase, and the children follow. They notice as they climb the stairs that Count Olaf has a TATTOO of an eye on his ankle. They stop on the landing.

COUNT OLAF

Here's your room. Further up is my  
tower. You are never to enter it.

The children gaze upward, where they see the door to the tower, which features the familiar eye motif. There's an intricate lock on the door.

Count Olaf opens the door to their room.

INT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - BAUDELAIRE BEDROOM - DAY

COUNT OLAF

(pushing the children forward)  
Well, here you are. Good night!

He slams the door behind them and they hear the lock click. Violet and Klaus exchange a look. It's still daytime.

They take in their surroundings. There's a single bed, some grubby curtains, a refrigerator box that has "CLOZET" written on it, and a pile of rocks. There's also a painting of an eye on the wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

10.

KLAUS

What do we do now? Count Olaf  
seems... terrible.

Sunny shrieks in agreement.

VIOLET

(thoughtfully)

Maybe he just made a bad first  
impression. If things get really  
bad, we can talk to Mr. Poe.

INT. MR. POE'S CAR - DAY

Mr. Poe begins coughing uncontrollably, and his top hat  
flies out the open window. He tries to grab it, but it's too  
late.

BACK TO SCENE

VIOLET

(looking around glumly)

Let's see what we can do to make  
this room a little nicer.

Violet pulls the curtains down from the window and arranges  
them into a cushion of sorts for Sunny. Sunny tests out the  
rocks with her teeth while Klaus tries to smooth out the  
lumpy bed.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)

Sometimes the best company can make  
the worst of situations just a  
little bit better.

INT. BAUDELAIRE MANSION - VIOLET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT -  
FLASHBACK

The children are curled up on Violet's bed, playing a game  
of dominoes. Violet's room is big and spacious, and the  
children are in peals of laughter.

BACK TO SCENE

We see the children curled up on their tiny bed, with  
Sunny's nest of curtains in the center. They're playing some  
sort of game with the rocks. It's sweet, but sad. The  
afternoon light starts to fade.

INT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

It's morning. The Baudelaires make their way down the staircase, sore from their poor sleeping arrangements.

They enter the kitchen, where a grubby NOTE has been nailed to the kitchen cabinets.

Grayish oatmeal sits in three bowls on the counter.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)

Violet could have been right about Count Olaf making a bad first impression. First impressions are often entirely wrong, and your initial opinion on just about anything may change over time. I wish I could tell you that the Baudelaires' first impressions of Count Olaf and his house were incorrect. But after a week of living with him, the children realized these impressions--that Count Olaf was a horrible person, and his house was a depressing pigsty--were absolutely correct.

Violet pulls the note from the cabinet. It's signed with an eye that matches Count Olaf's tattoo.

The children sit down to eat.

VIOLET

(reading the note)

"Orphans, my theater troupe will be coming for dinner before tonight's performance. Have dinner ready for all of us by the time time we arrive at seven o'clock. And most importantly, stay out of our way."

She drops the note on the table.

VIOLET

Why does he still call us orphans even though he's our guardian?

KLAUS

At least he's not making us paint the porch or clean the chimney again. We still don't know how to cook, though.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

12.

VIOLET

Remember the sauce our parents used to make? Puttanesca? Maybe we could make that.

KLAUS

Maybe Count Olaf has a cookbook somewhere. I wish our parents were here, though.

VIOLET

They would never let us stay in this dreadful place.

SUNNY

Yak!

KLAUS

(getting upset)

If they were here, we wouldn't be with Count Olaf in the first place. I hate it here. I hate this house. I hate our room. I hate having to do all these chores. And I hate Count Olaf!

VIOLET

I hate it too, Klaus.

They look at each other in relief. Klaus begins to calm down.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)

Sometimes, just saying that you hate something and having someone agree with you can make you feel better about a terrible situation.

VIOLET

I hate everything about our lives right now, Klaus. But we have to keep our chins up, like our father used to say.

KLAUS

(smiling now)

You're right. But it's hard to keep one's chin up when Count Olaf keeps shoving it down. And leaving us weird notes.

Violet and Sunny laugh, and the children look all over the kitchen for a cookbook. It's a fruitless search.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

13.

VIOLET

Maybe there's a cookbook in the tower? We could look while Count Olaf's gone.

KLAUS

Do you really want to go up there, though?

The doorbell rings, and the children all jump. Sunny gives a small shriek. It's as if Olaf heard them.

VIOLET

Who in the world would want to visit Count Olaf?

Violet scoops up Sunny, and the children head to the front door. They open it to find Justice Strauss, sunlight streaming behind her.

EXT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - DOORWAY - DAY

VIOLET

Justice Strauss! How lovely to see you.

Violet begins to step back to allow Justice Strauss inside, but then realizes that she probably does not want to come into Olaf's filthy house. The children stand awkwardly in the doorway, happy to see their friend regardless.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Please forgive me for not stopping by sooner, Baudelaires. I wanted to see how you all were settling in, but I've been very busy with a difficult case in the High Court lately.

SUNNY

Yeeka!

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)

This probably meant, "How interesting!", although of course there's no way of knowing exactly what Sunny meant.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

(laughing, patting Sunny's head)

Yeeka indeed.

Sunny gently bites Justice Strauss' hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

14.

VIOLET

That means she likes you. She bites  
very, very hard if she doesn't like  
you. Or if you want to give her a  
bath.

Sunny grins, baring her teeth.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

I see! Now then, how are you  
children getting on here? Is there  
anything you desire?

The children look at each other and then look down,  
pondering their situation. After a pause, they have an  
answer.

KLAUS

Could we perhaps borrow a cookbook?  
Count Olaf has asked us to make  
dinner for his theater troupe  
tonight, and we can't find a  
cookbook in the house.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Goodness! Cooking dinner for an  
entire theater troupe seems like a  
lot to ask of you.

VIOLET

(dryly)

Count Olaf gives us a lot of  
responsibility.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Well, why don't you three come next  
door and look for a cookbook?

INT. JUSTICE STRAUSS' HOUSE - LIBRARY - DAY

Justice Strauss brings them into her house and leads them  
into an enormous, elegant LIBRARY. It's filled from floor to  
ceiling with books.

VIOLET

This is a wonderful library.

KLAUS

(awestruck)

It's beautiful. Breathtaking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

15.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Thank you very much. I've been collecting books for years, and I'm very proud of my collection. As long as you keep them in good condition, you are welcome to use any of my books, at any time.

KLAUS

(very obviously thrilled)  
Thank you, Justice Strauss!

JUSTICE STRAUSS

(smiling)  
Now, do you children have any idea what you want to cook for Count Olaf?

VIOLET

We were thinking about pasta puttanesca. Our parents used to make it for us. Do you know that recipe?

JUSTICE STRAUSS

I know just the one! That's one of my very favorite dishes.

INT. BAUDELAIRE MANSION - DINING ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Justice Strauss nibbles on garlic bread while a very pregnant Mrs. Baudelaire serves puttanesca to her. Mr. Baudelaire, Mr. Poe and his wife are also in attendance.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

This looks delicious, Beatrice.  
Would you mind giving me the recipe?

BACK TO SCENE

She pulls a recipe box from one of her shelves for the children.

VIOLET

If I remember correctly, it's a very simple recipe.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Sometimes, simplest is best.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

16.

VIOLET  
(smiling)  
Very true.

JUSTICE STRAUSS  
Well, let me copy out this recipe  
for you while you look around the  
library.

VIOLET  
Thank you, Justice Strauss.

As Justice Strauss copies the recipe, the children browse  
the library. Klaus is already making his way through a book.  
They feel at home again.

JUSTICE STRAUSS  
Here we are! After you've finished  
reading, why don't I walk you home?

VIOLET  
That would be nice.

EXT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - DAY

Justice Strauss and the children stop outside Count Olaf's  
front door.

JUSTICE STRAUSS  
I do hope you children will come  
over soon and visit again.

KLAUS  
(quickly)  
Tomorrow?

JUSTICE STRAUSS  
(laughing)  
Well, I don't see why not.

VIOLET  
(with consideration)  
I can't tell you how much we  
appreciate this, Justice Strauss.  
Tomorrow, Klaus and I would be more  
than happy to help with your  
household chores. Sunny isn't old  
enough to do much work, but I'm  
sure we can find some way she can  
help.

Justice Strauss smiles, but her eyes are sad and nearly  
brimming with tears. She reaches out and gently touches  
Violet's hair in a motherly way.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

17.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

That won't be necessary. You three  
are always welcome in my home.

She gives them another smile before heading back to her  
house, and the Baudelaires enter Count Olaf's house.

INT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Violet works on the pasta puttanesca while Klaus mixes  
chocolate pudding.

Sunny sits on the floor and sings a rather repetitive song.  
Their afternoon with Justice Strauss has cheered them up  
considerably. They hear the front door slam.

COUNT OLAF (O.S.)

Orphans? Where are you, orphans?

KLAUS

(rolling his eyes)  
We're in the kitchen, Count Olaf.

Count Olaf enters the kitchen and strikes a weird pose.

COUNT OLAF

You'd better be. My troupe is right  
behind me and we're all very  
hungry. Where's the roast beef?

VIOLET

We didn't make roast beef--we made  
pasta puttanesca.

COUNT OLAF

(irrationally)  
Oh, *gross!* No roast beef?

KLAUS

You didn't tell us you wanted roast  
beef.

Count Olaf moves toward the children, hovering over them.  
His eyes seem shinier than ever.

COUNT OLAF

In agreeing to adopt you, orphans,  
I have become your father. And I  
*demand* that you serve roast beef to  
myself and my guests.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

18.

SUNNY  
(loudly)  
No! No! No!

Count Olaf looks down at Sunny and picks her up with an inhuman roar. Sunny bursts into tears.

KLAUS  
Put her down!

Count Olaf gives him a terrible grin and raises Sunny higher into the air. Sunny wails.

There's a huge burst of laughter from the hallway, and Count Olaf's THEATRE TROUPE makes its way into the kitchen. There's FERNALD, a man with HOOKS for hands, CYRANO, a bald man with a long nose, ORLANDO, a person who could be either a man or a woman, and STELLA and BLANCHE, two women with WHITE POWDER on their faces. It makes sense that these are Count Olaf's cohorts.

STELLA  
There you are, Olaf.

BLANCHE  
What in the world are you doing?

COUNT OLAF  
I'm just disciplining these orphans.

FERNALD  
You can't go easy on children.

The troupe sizes up the Baudelaires as Count Olaf puts Sunny down.

CYRANO  
Are these those wealthy brats you were telling us about?

COUNT OLAF  
Yes. They're so awful I can hardly stand to be around them.

BLANCHE  
I don't blame you.

COUNT OLAF  
Well, enough talk. I suppose we'll eat their dinner, even though it is not the roast beef I asked for. Everyone, follow me into the dining room and I'll pour us some wine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

19.

The troupe shouts, "Huzzah!" and Count Olaf leads them out of the room. Cyrano lingers behind.

CYRANO  
(to Violet, taking her face in  
his hands)  
You're a pretty one. If I were you,  
I'd try not to anger Olaf. He might  
wreck that pretty little face of  
yours.

He giggles and exits after his comrades. The Baudelaires stand in the kitchen, lost for words. Sunny's still crying, and Klaus has started to tear up as well. Violet shivers.

KLAUS  
This is terrible. Terrible. Violet,  
what are we going to do?

VIOLET  
I don't know, Klaus. I'm afraid.

SUNNY  
Hux!

The children hear Count Olaf and his troupe chanting and pounding their fists in the dining room.

KLAUS  
Let's just serve the puttanesca.  
Who knows what Count Olaf will do  
to us if we don't?

Violet and Klaus pat Sunny on the head, and then pick up the noodles and sauce.

INT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The dining room is just as gross as the rest of the house.

Violet and Klaus make their way around the table, silently serving Count Olaf and his troupe as they make drunken fools of themselves.

Count Olaf tastes the pasta puttanesca.

COUNT OLAF  
Well, it isn't roast beef, but I  
guess it'll do. You're dismissed,  
orphans.

Violet and Klaus head back to the kitchen.

INT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The children serve themselves dinner and eat it silently.

Count Olaf and his troupe begin to bang on the table again, so Violet and Klaus take the pudding out to serve it.

Sunny tries to cheer herself up by gently banging on a pan until her siblings return.

Count Olaf and his troupe soon make their way back through the kitchen as well.

COUNT OLAF  
(to the children)  
Because you haven't cleaned up yet,  
I suppose you can be excused from  
attending tonight's performance.  
But after cleaning up, you are to  
go straight to your beds.

KLAUS  
(unable to remain silent)  
You mean our *bed*? You've only given  
us one!

Everyone falls silent.

The troupe members glance back and forth between Klaus and Count Olaf, then start to snicker. Count Olaf looks enraged, but remains silent.

All of a sudden, he slaps Klaus across the face. Klaus' glasses fall off and he falls to the floor.

There's another pause, but then the theater troupe begins to laugh, and a few applaud. Violet and Sunny are horrified.

COUNT OLAF  
(to the troupe)  
Well, come on, friends. We'll be  
late for our own performance!

Count Olaf and his troupe make their way out of the house.

FERNALD (O.S.)  
If I know you, Olaf, you'll figure  
out a way to get that fortune.

COUNT OLAF (O.S.)  
(laughs)  
We'll see.

The front door slams, and the Baudelaires are alone again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

21.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
Unless you have been very, very  
lucky, you have undoubtedly  
experienced events in your life  
that have made you cry. So unless  
you are very, very lucky, you know  
that a good long session of crying  
can often make you feel better,  
even if your circumstances have not  
changed one bit.

Violet kneels down by Klaus and hugs him. Sunny retrieves  
Klaus' glasses and brings them to him. As they begin to  
clean up the kitchen, the children cry silently.

They're still crying as they head out of the kitchen and up  
to their room.

EXT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Violet and Klaus are working on their chore for the  
day--chopping firewood. Klaus' face is bruised.

Sunny sits by the pile of chopped wood, gnawing on a small  
piece of it.

KLAUS  
(gesturing to his bruise)  
Clearly we cannot stay here any  
longer. I would rather take my  
chances on the streets than live  
with Count Olaf.

VIOLET  
But who knows what would happen to  
us? At least here we have a roof  
over our heads.

KLAUS  
I wish we *could* use our parents'  
money now. Then we could get far  
away from Count Olaf.

VIOLET  
In the meantime though, we have to  
do something.

KLAUS  
Perhaps Justice Strauss could adopt  
us. She said we were always welcome  
in her home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

22.

VIOLET

But she meant for a visit. She  
didn't mean to *live*.

KLAUS

Perhaps if we explained our  
situation to her, she would agree  
to adopt us.

VIOLET

(doubtfully)

Maybe. I think we should go see Mr.  
Poe. He said we could contact him  
at the bank if we had any  
questions.

KLAUS

We don't really have a question. We  
have a complaint.

Violet smiles and chops one last piece of wood.

INT. MULCTUARY MONEY MANAGEMENT - LOBBY - DAY

The children wait on a plush couch. MULCTUARY MONEY  
MANAGEMENT, the bank where Mr. Poe works, is sleek and  
glamorous.

A receptionist answers her phone and then smiles at the  
children kindly. She comes over to them.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Poe will see you now.

INT. MULCTUARY MONEY MANAGEMENT - MR. POE'S OFFICE - DAY

MR. POE'S OFFICE is filled with filing cabinets. Paper is  
everywhere. His desk has three telephones on it.

MR. POE

Hello, children.

KLAUS

Hello, Mr. Poe.

Mr. Poe begins to speak, but then coughs uncontrollably.  
After a few seconds, he's finally finished.

MR. POE

I'm very busy today, so I don't  
have much time to chat. Next time  
you should call ahead and I will  
put aside time to take you to  
lunch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

23.

VIOLET

That would be very pleasant, and we're sorry we didn't contact you beforehand, but we find ourselves in an urgent situation.

KLAUS

(straight to the point)  
Count Olaf is a madman. We cannot stay with him.

VIOLET

He struck Klaus across the face.  
See his bruise?

One of the telephones rings.

MR. POE

Excuse me.

He picks up the phone.

MR. POE (CONT'D)

Poe here. What? Yes. Yes.  
Naturally. Yes. Yes. No. Yes. Thank you.

He hangs up the phone and looks at the Baudelaires expectantly.

MR. POE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. What were we talking about? Oh, yes. Count Olaf. I'm sorry he didn't make a good first impression.

KLAUS

He's only provided us with one bed.

VIOLET

He makes us do difficult chores.

KLAUS

He drinks too much wine.

Another phone rings.

MR. POE

Excuse me.

He picks up the phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

24.

MR. POE (CONT'D)  
Poe here. Seven. Seven. Seven.  
Seven. Why would you even say ten?  
Six and a half. Seven. You're  
welcome.

He hangs up, scribbles something down, and looks at the  
children again.

MR. POE (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, what were you saying  
about Count Olaf? Making you do  
chores doesn't sound so bad.

VIOLET  
He calls us orphans.

KLAUS  
He has terrible friends.

VIOLET  
He's always asking about our money.

SUNNY  
Poko!

Mr. Poe raises his hands. He's heard enough.

MR. POE  
Children, children. You must give  
yourselves time to adjust to your  
new home. You've only been there  
for a short time.

KLAUS  
We've been there long enough to  
know that Count Olaf is a bad man.

Mr. Poe sighs. His face is kind, but he seems doubtful.

MR. POE  
Children, are you familiar with the  
Latin term "in loco parentis"?

Violet and Sunny look to Klaus. He shakes his head.

MR. POE  
(gently)  
"In loco parentis" means "acting in  
the role of a parent." Now that you  
are in Count Olaf's care, he can  
raise you using any methods he sees  
fit. These are things you must get  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

25.

MR. POE (cont'd)  
used to. He is acting in loco  
parentis. Do you understand?

VIOLET  
But he *struck* Klaus! Look at his  
face!

Mr. Poe begins coughing again.

MR. POE  
Whatever Count Olaf has done, he  
has acted in loco parentis, and  
there's nothing I can do about it.  
Count Olaf's parenting techniques  
are his own business. Now, I hate  
to rush you out posthaste, but I  
have a lot of work to do. Posthaste  
means--

VIOLET  
(angrily/sassily)  
That you'll do nothing to help us.

She picks up Sunny, and the three children march out of Mr.  
Poe's office as one of his phones begins to ring.

EXT. MULCTUARY MONEY MANAGEMENT - DAY

The children stand by an ornate fountain, not knowing what  
to do now.

KLAUS  
What shall we do now?

Violet stares at the sky, trying to collect her thoughts.

VIOLET  
It's getting a bit late. We might  
as well just go back home and try  
to figure out something on our own.  
Perhaps we can stop and see Justice  
Strauss.

KLAUS  
But you said she couldn't help us.

VIOLET  
Not for help--for books.

INT. JUSTICE STRAUSS' HOUSE - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Violet and Klaus are reading happily, almost defiantly, in Justice Strauss's squishy armchairs.

Justice Strauss plays patty-cake with Sunny on the floor.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
It is very useful to learn the  
difference between the words  
"literally" and "figuratively." If  
you are literally jumping for joy,

EXT. BRINY BEACH - DAY - FLASHBACK

Sunny is jumped over a puddle by her parents. She shrieks with delight.

BACK TO SCENE

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.) [CONT'D]  
it means you are leaping in the air  
because you are very happy. If you  
are figuratively jumping for joy,  
it means you are so happy that you  
*could* jump for joy, but you are  
saving your energy for other  
matters. With their visit to  
Justice Strauss, the children had  
figuratively escaped Count Olaf and  
their miserable existence. They did  
not literally escape, because they  
were still in his care and  
vulnerable to his ways. But through  
the company of their friend, they  
felt far away from their  
predicament, as if they had  
escaped.

INT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

It's morning. The Baudelaires walk into the kitchen to find not a note, but Count Olaf himself.

Three bowls of oatmeal sit on the table, this time with raspberries on top. The raspberries form a smiley face pattern. Count Olaf looks very happy. It's unsettling.

COUNT OLAF  
Good morning, my ornerly orphans. I  
have your oatmeal all ready in  
bowls for you. Isn't that cute of  
me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

27.

The children are confused. Klaus picks up a raspberry and examines it.

KLAUS  
(carefully)  
Thank you?

Count Olaf sees Klaus' suspicion and eats one of the raspberries.

COUNT OLAF  
Aren't raspberries delicious? They  
were my favorite berries when I was  
your age.

INT. V.F.D. HEADQUARTERS - KITCHEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

A very young Count Olaf (10-12) plucks a raspberry from a bowl in the headquarters' KITCHEN, grinning mischievously. As he prepares to eat it, someone smacks it out of his hand. His grin becomes a malevolent snarl.

BACK TO SCENE

The children take seats at the table and begin eating as Count Olaf looks on benevolently. It's so pleasant that it's horrifying.

COUNT OLAF (CONT'D)  
I received a phone call yesterday  
from Mr. Poe.

The children exchange glances.

COUNT OLAF (CONT'D)  
(almost sincerely)  
He told me that you seemed to be  
having some difficulty adjusting to  
the life I have provided for you.  
I'm very sorry to hear that.

Now the children look at Count Olaf. His face looks serious, but his eyes are as shiny as ever.

VIOLET  
Is that so? I'm sorry Mr. Poe  
bothered you.

COUNT OLAF  
Oh, no. I'm glad he did. I want the  
three of you to feel at home here,  
now that I am your father.

A pause. The children look blankly at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

28.

COUNT OLAF (CONT'D)

Lately, I have been nervous about my performances with the theater troupe, and I'm afraid I may have acted standoffish.

He rests his head benignly on his hands, his eyes wide, looking apologetic.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)

The word "standoffish" is a wonderful one, but Count Olaf was using it incorrectly. It might describe somebody who, during a party, would stand in a corner and not talk to anyone. It does not describe somebody who provides one bed for three people, forces them to do horrible chores, and strikes them across the face. There are many words for people like that, but "standoffish" is not one of them.

COUNT OLAF

Therefore, to make you feel a little more at home here, I would like to have you participate in my next play. Perhaps if you took part in the work I do, you'd be less likely to run off complaining to poopy old Mr. Poe.

VIOLET

How would we participate?

COUNT OLAF

(excitedly)

Well, we were going to do "Antony and Cleopatra," by William Randolph Shakespeare, but there aren't many roles in that for children.

KLAUS

I don't think Shakespeare had a middle name.

COUNT OLAF

Oh. Maybe. Anyways, I couldn't play both Antony and Cleopatra!

He laughs weirdly and hysterically, slapping the table. The children don't know how to react.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

29.

COUNT OLAF (CONT'D)

(unfazed)

So the play we're doing instead is called "The Marvelous Marriage," which is by the great playwright Al Funcoot. We will only give one performance: this Friday night. People love limited engagements! The play is about a man who is very brave and intelligent, played by me. In the finale, he marries the young, beautiful woman he loves, in front of a crowd of cheering people. *You*, Klaus, and *you*, Sunny, will play some of the cheering people in the crowd! Wow!

SUNNY

Wow.

KLAUS

(dryly)

But we're shorter than most adults.

COUNT OLAF

(patiently)

You will be playing two midgets who are attending the wedding.

VIOLET

And what will I do?

COUNT OLAF

I have *such* an important role for you. You are going to the play the young woman I marry.

Violet blinks rapidly and looks as if she might vomit.

COUNT OLAF (CONT'D)

(smiling)

It's a very important role, although you have no lines other than "I do," which you will say when Justice Strauss asks if you will have me.

VIOLET

Justice Strauss? What does she have to do with it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

30.

COUNT OLAF

She has agreed to play the part of the judge. I asked her to participate because I wanted to be neighborly, as well as fatherly. Isn't that just great of me?  
(almost reflectively)  
Oh, sorry! I'm just having one of those moments where I realize what a great person I am.

VIOLET

(carefully)

Count Olaf -- I'm not sure I'm talented enough to perform professionally. I would hate to disgrace your good name and the name of Al Funcoot.

Count Olaf reaches out and grabs her face with his hand. He looks deep into her eyes.

COUNT OLAF

You *will* participate in my play. I would prefer it if you would participate voluntarily, but I *can* order you to participate and you *must* obey.

He lets go of Violet's face, and gets up and leaves without another word.

The children hear him stomping up the stairs, and then they hear the tower door slam and lock. Klaus groans.

KLAUS

Well, I guess it won't hurt to be in the play.

VIOLET

But he must be up to something.

KLAUS

You don't think the berries were poisoned, do you? He ate one.

VIOLET

No. Olaf is after the fortune we'll inherit. Killing us would do him no good.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

31.

KLAUS

But what good does it do him to  
have us be in his stupid play?

VIOLET

I don't know.

She rises from the table and starts washing the dishes.

KLAUS

I wish we knew something more about  
inheritance law. I'll bet Count  
Olaf is up to something.

VIOLET

How can we find out about the law  
without Olaf's knowledge?

SUNNY

(suddenly)

Book!

Violet and Klaus turn to her. She's solved their dilemma.

VIOLET

(mischievously)

Count Olaf didn't leave us any  
chores to do, so I *suppose* we are  
free to visit Justice Strauss and  
her library.

KLAUS

(smiling)

Yes indeed. And you know, I don't  
think I'll choose a book on Emperor  
Augustus today.

VIOLET

And I don't feel like reading about  
mechanical engineering. I think I'd  
like to read about inheritance law.

KLAUS

Well, let's go. Justice Strauss  
said to come back soon, and we  
don't want to be *standoffish*.

The children all laugh.

EXT. JUSTICE STRAUSS' HOUSE - BACKYARD/GARDEN - DAY

Justice Strauss's GARDEN is just as tidy and lovely as her library.

Violet and Klaus sit at the patio, poring over thick law books.

Sunny plays with a pile of dirt in the garden. Justice Strauss comes out of the house, carrying a tray of lemonade.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Goodness. Are you sure you want to read those enormous law books? Even I don't like reading them, and I work in law.

VIOLET

Yes. I find them very interesting.

KLAUS

So do I. Violet and I are considering careers in law.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Well, Sunny has been a great help with my gardening.

KLAUS

Just make sure she doesn't eat any dirt.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Of course! We don't want her getting sick before the big performance.

Violet and Klaus exchange a look.

VIOLET

(hesitantly)

Are you excited about the play?

JUSTICE STRAUSS

(thrilled)

Oh, yes. I've always wanted to perform onstage, ever since I was young.



EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

A younger Justice Strauss (20s) unbridles a horse from a carriage. She stares up at a blazing marquee that reads "Julius Caesar." Her eyes are wide with excitement.

BACK TO SCENE

JUSTICE STRAUSS (CONT'D)  
And now Count Olaf has given me the opportunity to fulfill my lifelong dream. Aren't you thrilled to be a part of the theater?

VIOLET  
I guess so.

JUSTICE STRAUSS  
Of course you are. Well, help yourselves to some lemonade. I'm going to see what Sunny is up to.

She places the tray on the table and heads off. After she's gone, Klaus sighs.

KLAUS  
She's stagestruck. She won't believe that Count Olaf is up to something, no matter what.

VIOLET  
(glumly)  
She wouldn't help us anyway. She's a judge. She'd just start babbling about in loco parentis like Mr. Poe.

They look out at Justice Strauss, who's playing and laughing with Sunny in the garden.

KLAUS  
That's why we've got to find a legal reason to stop the performance. Have you found anything in your book yet?

Violet turns to a page she's marked.

VIOLET  
Nothing that helpful. Fifty years ago a woman left an enormous sum of money to her pet weasel and none to her three sons. The sons tried to  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

34.

VIOLET (cont'd)  
prove she was insane so the money  
would go to them.

KLAUS  
What happened?

VIOLET  
I think the weasel ended up  
inheriting. Law is weird.

KLAUS  
I don't think it's going to help us  
anyway.

VIOLET  
(smiling)  
The weasel?

KLAUS  
I wish we could weasel our way out  
of this play.

VIOLET  
Maybe Count Olaf is trying to prove  
that we're insane, so he can have  
our money.

She slams her book shut, defeated.

KLAUS  
But why would making us be in "The  
Marvelous Marriage" prove we were  
insane?

VIOLET  
(sighing)  
I don't know. I'm stuck. Maybe  
Count Olaf isn't up to anything.  
Maybe he really *is* just trying to  
welcome us into his family.

KLAUS  
How can you say that?

VIOLET  
But there's no way he can get a  
hold of our fortune just by putting  
us in a play. Do you mind if I take  
a break and go help Justice  
Strauss?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

35.

KLAUS

No, go ahead. I'm going to keep looking.

Violet heads off into the garden, and Klaus pulls a new book from the stack and begins reading.

FERNALD (O.S.)

You there!

Klaus jumps, turning his attention to the fence. It's Fernald, Olaf's hook-handed comrade. Klaus rolls his eyes. Fernald enters the backyard and steps onto the patio.

FERNALD

Count Olaf sent me to find you.  
You're to come home immediately.

With some difficulty, he snatches Klaus' book.

FERNALD (CONT'D)

*Inheritance Law and Its  
Implications?* Why are you reading  
this?

KLAUS

Why do you think I'm reading it?

Fernald puts one of his hooks on Klaus' shoulder.

FERNALD

I'll tell you what I think. I think  
you should never be allowed in this  
woman's house again. At least until  
the play. Now, where is your sister  
and that hideous baby?

KLAUS

They're in the garden. Why don't  
you go and get them?

FERNALD

(leaning in menacingly)  
Listen to me very carefully. Count  
Olaf allows you to live while he  
works out his plans. But ask  
yourself this, little bookworm:  
what reason will he have to keep  
you alive after he has your money?  
What do you think will happen then?

He scrapes his hooks together, making a terrible  
sound. Klaus shudders.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

36.

FERNALD (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to  
go fetch the other orphans.

He heads into the garden. Klaus looks around frantically. He  
pulls a BOOK from the stack, and hides it under his shirt.

Fernald, Violet, and Sunny come out of the garden as Justice  
Strauss waves.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Goodbye, children! I'm sure I'll  
see you soon.

KLAUS

Goodbye, Justice Strauss. Thanks  
for having us over.

Klaus leads the way out of the garden, head held high, his  
arms crossed, a book-shaped lump in his shirt.

INT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - BAUDELAIRE BEDROOM - DAY

It's the crack of dawn.

Klaus sits by the window, holding a book with many flagged  
pages. He's obviously been up all night reading.

Violet tosses and turns in the bed, and Sunny has wormed her  
way into the curtain nest.

Finishing the last page as the sun rises behind him, Klaus  
closes the book and heads out of the room.

INT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Klaus sits at the kitchen table with the book, waiting for  
Count Olaf. He hears Count Olaf tromping down the stairs.

Count Olaf stands in the doorway, smirking.

COUNT OLAF

Hi there, Oliver Twist. You're up  
early.

KLAUS

(calmly)

I've been up all night reading this  
book. It's called *Nuptial Law*. And  
I learned many interesting things  
while reading it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

37.

Count Olaf starts pouring himself wine for breakfast, but stops when he realizes what Klaus has said. He takes a seat across from Klaus.

KLAUS (CONT'D)

The word "nuptial" means "relating to marriage."

COUNT OLAF

(growling)

I *know* what it means. Where did you get that book?

KLAUS

From Justice Strauss' library. But that's not important. What's important is that I have found out your plan.

COUNT OLAF

(eyebrow raised)

Is that so? And what is my plan, you arrogant egghead?

KLAUS

(reading)

"The laws of marriage in this city are very simple. The requirements are as follows: the presence of a judge, a statement of "I do" by both the bride and the groom, and the signing of an explanatory document in the bride's own hand."

Klaus puts the book down and points at Count Olaf.

KLAUS

If my sister says "I do" and signs a piece of paper, while Justice Strauss is in the room, then she is legally married. You're not going to marry Violet figuratively--you're going to marry her literally! The play won't be pretend--it will be real and legally binding!

COUNT OLAF

(laughing)

Your sister isn't old enough to get married.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

38.

KLAUS

She can if she has the permission  
of her legal guardian, acting in  
loco parentis. I read that, too.  
You can't fool me.

Count Olaf smiles horribly.

COUNT OLAF

And why in the world would I want  
to literally marry your sister? It  
is true she is very pretty, but a  
man like myself could acquire a  
veritable harem of beautiful women.

Klaus turns to another section of the book.

KLAUS

(reading)

"A legal husband has the right to  
control any money in the possession  
of his legal wife."

Klaus looks at Count Olaf, triumphant.

KLAUS (CONT'D)

You're going to marry my sister to  
gain control of our fortune. But  
when I show this information to Mr.  
Poe, your play will *not* be  
performed, and you will go to jail!

Count Olaf just sits there, staring calmly. Klaus is  
befuddled.

COUNT OLAF

Well, I guess you've found me out.  
I suppose you're right: I'll go to  
prison, and you and the girl  
orphans will go free. You'll be  
able to read and invent things and  
bite each other, or whatever it is  
you do. Now, why don't you run up  
to your room and wake up your  
sisters? I'm sure they'll want to  
know all about your thrilling  
victory over me and my villainous  
ways.

Klaus has no idea what to do. This is not what he expected.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

39.

KLAUS

I *will* go tell my sisters.

He heads out of the kitchen, with Count Olaf still smiling in the background.

Klaus bounds up the stairs, bursting through the door of the Baudelaire bedroom.

INT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - BAUDELAIRE BEDROOM - DAY

He wakes up Violet first.

KLAUS

(breathlessly)

I stayed up all night reading, and I discovered what Olaf is up to. He plans to marry you--for real--when you and Justice Strauss and everyone think it's just a play, and once he's your husband he'll have control of our parents' money and he can dispose of us!

VIOLET

(groggily)

Um, what?

KLAUS

He's going to marry you for real!

VIOLET

(clearer now)

How can he, Klaus? It's only a play.

KLAUS

(holding up *Nuptial Law*)

The only legal requirements of marriage in this city are your saying "I do," and signing a document in your own hand in the presence of a judge--like Justice Strauss!

INT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Count Olaf stands outside the door of the children's bedroom, his ear close to the crack. The children whisper urgently.

INT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - BAUDELAIRE BEDROOM - DAY

Klaus is moving wildly around the room.

KLAUS  
We have to talk to Mr. Poe. Quick,  
get dressed while I wake up Sunny,  
and we can be at the bank by the  
time it opens.

Violet begins going through the refrigerator box for clothes  
while Klaus gently prods the pile of curtains.

KLAUS  
Sunny. *Sunny*.

There's no response. Klaus investigates the curtains--Sunny  
isn't there.

KLAUS (CONT'D)  
She's not there! Sunny!

VIOLET  
Sunny!

The two search all over the room.

INT./EXT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - TOWER - DAY

Sunny sits in a small BIRDCAGE, with tape over her mouth. It  
sways in the morning breeze.

INT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - BAUDELAIRE BEDROOM - DAY

VIOLET  
(worriedly)  
Where can she be? She's not the  
type to run off.

COUNT OLAF (O.S.)  
Where can she be indeed?

Violet and Klaus jump.

Count Olaf stands in the doorway, smiling like he's just  
told a joke.

COUNT OLAF (CONT'D)  
Yes, it certainly is strange to  
find a child missing. And one so  
small, so helpless! That's very  
irresponsible of you to misplace  
her like that.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

41.

VIOLET

Where is she? What have you done  
with her?

EXT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Count Olaf stands with his hands on his hips while Violet  
and Klaus look around for Sunny.

COUNT OLAF

You're not looking in the right  
place. For children who supposedly  
read so much, you two are  
remarkably unintelligent.

Violet looks up at Count Olaf. He's gazing skyward. She  
grabs Klaus' shoulder, and points.

KLAUS

(scared)

Oh, no.

They see Sunny, in the birdcage, hanging from the window of  
Olaf's forbidden tower. It's 30 feet up.

VIOLET

Let her go! She hasn't done  
anything!

Count Olaf takes a seat on a stump and crosses his legs.

COUNT OLAF

Well, now. If you really want me to  
let her go, I will. But even a  
stupid brat like you might realize  
that if I let her go, poor little  
Sunny might not survive the fall.  
But if you *insist*...

KLAUS

No!

Violet gazes toward the tower, tears in her eyes.

VIOLET

*Please.* She's just a baby. We'll do  
*anything.* Just don't harm her.

COUNT OLAF

*Anything?* Hmm. Would you, for  
instance, consider marrying me  
during tomorrow night's  
performance?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

42.

Violet's tears roll down her face.

COUNT OLAF (CONT'D)  
While you were busy reading books  
and making accusations, I had one  
of my quietest, sneakiest  
assistants skulk into your bedroom  
and steal little Sunny away. She is  
perfectly safe, for now. You will  
do what I say, to avoid the  
punishment of losing your sister,  
and for the reward of surviving  
this experience. And I will get  
your fortune. Win, win, win. Now,  
Violet, let me ask you again:  
*will you marry me?*

Violet swallows, and looks down at Count Olaf's tattoo. She  
can't bring herself to answer.

COUNT OLAF (CONT'D)  
Come now.

He stands up and grasps Violet's hand.

COUNT OLAF (CONT'D)  
Would it be so terrible to be my  
bride?

VIOLET  
(resignedly)  
If you let Sunny go, I will marry  
you.

Count Olaf lets out a cry of joy and punches the air.

COUNT OLAF  
I will let Sunny go after tomorrow  
night's performance. In the  
meantime, she'll remain in the  
tower for safekeeping.

KLAUS  
You're terrible!

COUNT OLAF  
I may be terrible, but I have been  
able to concoct a foolproof way of  
getting your fortune, which is more  
than you've been able to do.

He stalks back toward the house, and whips around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

43.

COUNT OLAF (CONT'D)

Remember that, orphans. You may have read more books than I have, but it didn't help you gain the upper hand in this situation. Now, come back inside and do the chores assigned to you.

Klaus follows Count Olaf inside, but Violet's still looking at the tower.

Klaus looks back, and sees Violet, off in her own world, tying her hair back in a ribbon. He smiles.

INT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - BAUDELAIRE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Klaus is sleeping fitfully on the bed.

Moonlight filters in through the window. Violet gazes around the room, her hair still tied back. She begins working on an invention to save Sunny.

SERIES OF SHOTS - MOS

A) Violet pulls the curtain rod from above the window, and uses one of the rocks to break and bend it into smaller pieces

B) Violet removes the eye painting from the wall, pulling the wire off the back to join the curtain rod pieces

C) Violet rifles through the clothing in the refrigerator box and begins tearing some of it into strips

D) Violet ties the strips together and joins them with the broken curtain rod

E) Violet smiles to herself while holding her invention--a GRAPPLING HOOK

F) Violet tiptoes down the stairs, her makeshift rope trailing silently behind her

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Violet stands in the yard, gazing up at her destination. She shivers in the chill of the night. It's close to morning.

After some consideration, she throws the grappling hook with her right hand. It hits the tower with a CLANG, and Violet winces.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

44.

The hook comes crashing back down. Violet throws the hook again--it hits the tower twice, CLANG, CLANG--and comes back down. Violet looks around, nervous.

She throws it one more time. It hits with a CLANG, comes back down, and hits Violet in the shoulder.

She gasps: it's cut her.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
At this point in the proceedings,  
if I were Violet, I would have  
given up. But she pictured how  
scared Sunny must be, and, ignoring  
the pain in her shoulder, Violet  
used her right hand to throw the  
hook again.

The hook sails through the air. There's a different CLANG  
this time: metal on metal.

Her face lights up. She tugs on the makeshift rope to check  
its security.

She begins climbing up the rope, her eyes closed. She climbs  
and climbs, eventually reaching the windowsill. She pulls  
herself in, triumphant, and sees Sunny in her cage.

Sunny's gesticulating at something.

INT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - TOWER - DAY

Violet whips around. It's Fernald, the hook-handed man.

FERNALD  
(sickly sweet)  
How pleasant of you to join us.

He throws Violet's invention out the window as the sun  
starts to rise.

Violet takes in her surroundings. Olaf's tower is a pigsty:  
there are piles of books and scraps of paper everywhere, the  
copy of *Nuptial Law*, flickering candles, and wine bottles  
and dirty dishes on the floor. Paintings and carvings of  
eyes cover the walls.

FERNALD (CONT'D)  
We've missed you terribly.

He pushes Violet into a chair. She exchanges a worried  
glance with Sunny. With some difficulty, Fernald pulls a  
WALKIE-TALKIE from his coat and begins speaking into it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

45.

FERNALD (CONT'D)  
Boss, it's Fernald. Your blushing  
bride just climbed up here to try  
and rescue the biting brat.

COUNT OLAF (O.S.)  
How dare she! Let her know I'm very  
displeased with her. Go get her  
brother and keep them up there!

Fernald puts the walkie-talkie away.

FERNALD  
Count Olaf is very displeased with  
his bride.

VIOLET  
I've heard. And I'm not his bride.

FERNALD  
Not yet, but pretty soon you will  
be. In the meantime, I'm going to  
fetch your brother. You three will  
stay locked up here until the play  
tonight.

Fernald stomps out of the tower, locking the door behind  
him.

Violet goes to Sunny and strokes her hair. She gently  
removes the tape from her mouth.

VIOLET  
It's all right.

SUNNY  
Blerg.

They hear the sound of footsteps on the stairs. The door  
crashes open, and Fernald pushes Klaus, still in his  
pajamas, into the tower.

FERNALD  
Three's company, isn't it? Now, I  
must go help Count Olaf with the  
final preparations for tonight's  
performance. No monkey business,  
you two, or I'll tie you up and  
dangle you out the window like your  
little sister.

He exits, slamming the door and locking it behind him. Klaus  
looks around the filthy room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

46.

KLAUS

What's going on? Why are we up here?

VIOLET

I tried to rescue Sunny. I made a grappling hook and used it to climb up the tower.

Klaus crosses over to the window, patting Sunny's head on the way. He looks out.

KLAUS

It's so high up! You must have been terrified.

VIOLET

It was very scary, but not as scary as the thought of being Countess Olaf.

KLAUS

Do you think you could invent something to help us escape from here?

VIOLET

Maybe. Why don't you go through those books and papers? Perhaps there's some information that could be of use.

The two get to work.

Klaus reads through *Nuptial Law*, marking pages. Violet gathers materials for possible inventions. They stop occasionally to pat Sunny's head and smile at her.

Eventually, they take a seat on the floor. It's nearing sunset.

VIOLET

Did you find anything?

KLAUS

Well, if you were a polygamist, Count Olaf's stupid marriage plot wouldn't work.

VIOLET

What's a polygamist?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

47.

KLAUS

Someone who's married to more than one person. In this city, it's illegal, according to *Nuptial Law*. Or you could say "I don't" instead of "I do," but I'm afraid Count Olaf would order Sunny to be dropped from the tower.

COUNT OLAF (O.S.)

I'm afraid I would.

Violet and Klaus jump. They didn't hear Count Olaf come in. Fernald's behind him. He waves a hook at the children.

COUNT OLAF (CONT'D)

Come, orphans. We need to get you fitted for your costumes. Fernald will stay behind here, and we'll keep in contact through our walkie-talkies. And if *anything* goes wrong during tonight's performance, little baby Baudelaire will be dropped to her death.

(cheerfully now)

Let's go. It's time for the big event!

EXT. AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

The sun is starting to set as Count Olaf and Fernald lead the Baudelaires through the theater where "The Marvelous Marriage" will be performed. It's an AMPHITHEATER, and it's right down the street from Olaf and Justice Strauss' houses.

Sunny's birdcage can be seen dangling from Olaf's tower in the distance.

COUNT OLAF

This is where we'll walk down the aisle, Violet. There'll be flower petals, fire breathers, flute players, fireworks--it'll be marvelous!

FERNALD

Marvelous!

As the group makes their way down the aisle, crew members prepare the theater for the performance.

FLOWER PETALS are being stuffed into cannon-like devices, and Roman-style COLUMNS are being raised on the stage.

Orlando rolls a giant GONG onto the stage. All the props from "Antony and Cleopatra" are being reused for "The Marvelous Marriage."

INT. AMPHITHEATER - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Violet's having her costuming and makeup done by Stella and Blanche. Violet is wearing a bright white TOGA, and the white-faced women are pushing snake bracelets onto her arms and painting heavy, Egyptian-style eye makeup onto her face. The audience chatters outside.

It's intermission. Crew members and actors mill about backstage.

STELLA  
(shadily)  
You know, Olaf said this part was  
supposed to be mine.

VIOLET  
(over it)  
Really? You can have it.

STELLA  
Humph! You wish.

She shoves a heavy Cleopatra WIG onto Violet's head.

BLANCHE  
Olaf said the part was mine!

COUNT OLAF (O.S.)  
Ladies!

Count Olaf enters. He's wearing a crimson CHITON and has a LAUREL WREATH woven into his greasy hair. He's holding his walkie-talkie. He yanks Klaus into the room, who's still in his pajamas.

COUNT OLAF (CONT'D)  
Why isn't Klaus in his costume  
yet?!

BLANCHE  
Sorry, boss. We were just finishing  
up with Violet.

COUNT OLAF  
(dramatically)  
*Oh my God*, I don't care! Get to  
work on Klaus! He's in Act Three  
too! He's part of the wedding  
parade.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

49.

STELLA  
Right away, boss.

Stella and Blanche exit, Klaus in tow. Count Olaf steps toward Violet.

COUNT OLAF  
My dear Violet. You look as  
beautiful as Emily Dickinson. I'll  
see you soon, my bride to be.

As he heads back to the stage, Violet looks confused over Olaf's weird compliment, then rolls her eyes.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

Justice Strauss gazes dreamily up at the amphitheater. In her mind, she sees a blazing marquee that reads "The Marvelous Marriage," much like the one from her past.

In reality, it's a shoddy, hand-painted sign.

INT. AMPHITHEATER - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Violet is looking doubtfully at her wig in a mirror as Justice Strauss enters. She's wearing a black TOGA and clutching a small book. She looks over the moon.

JUSTICE STRAUSS  
Oh, Violet! You look absolutely  
beautiful!

VIOLET  
Thank you, Justice Strauss.

Stella and Blanche reenter with Klaus. They're all in TOGAS now too.

JUSTICE STRAUSS  
Klaus! Look at you!

STELLA  
You three wait back here. It's  
almost time.

Stella and Blanche head back to the stage. A small bell RINGS. Act Two of the play is starting.

KLAUS  
Thank you, Justice Strauss. What's  
that book?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

50.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Those are my lines! Count Olaf told me to bring a law book and read the real wedding ceremony, in order to make the play as realistic as possible. This is going to be such fun!

VIOLET

(carefully)

You know what would be *really* fun? If you changed some of your lines around. Just a little.

Klaus's face lights up.

KLAUS

Yes, Justice Strauss! Be creative! There's no reason to stick to the legal ceremony. It's not as if it's a *real* wedding.

Justice Strauss frowns.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

I don't know, children. I think it would be best to follow Count Olaf's instructions. I don't want to mess him up.

A voice overhead calls for Justice Strauss to report to the makeup artist.

JUSTICE STRAUSS (CONT'D)

(dreamily)

Oh my word! I get to wear makeup. See you on stage, my dears! Oh, listen to me! I sound like a real actress!

She exits, leaving Violet and Klaus relatively alone in the pandemonium of the backstage area.

KLAUS

(quietly)

Violet, what can we do? Pretend to be sick? Maybe they'd call off the performance.

VIOLET

(glumly)

Count Olaf would know what we were up to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

51.

Cyrano enters, also wearing a TOGA.

CYRANO  
The final act of "The Marvelous  
Marriage" is about to begin!  
Everyone, please get in your places  
for Act Three! Members of the  
wedding parade, get to the aisle!

EXT. AMPHITHEATER - STAGE - NIGHT

Count Olaf takes a ridiculous bow onstage as the audience  
applauds. Act Two is ending.

COUNT OLAF  
(hammily)  
Thank you, thank you! You like me,  
you really like me!

INT./EXT. AMPHITHEATER - AISLE - NIGHT

The actors, including Olaf's troupe, Violet, and Klaus begin  
lining up. The final act begins with the wedding parade,  
which will make its way down the aisle and onto the stage.

CYRANO  
(quietly, to Violet and Klaus)  
No funny stuff, you hear? If you do  
even *one thing* wrong, Count Olaf  
will be giving little Sunny a call.

BLANCHE  
Yeah!

Violet and Klaus glance wistfully at the tower in the  
distance. No one in the audience seems to have noticed  
anything is wrong.

KLAUS  
(bitterly)  
Yes, we've heard.

CYRANO  
So you'd better do exactly as  
planned.

Mr. Poe has somehow squeezed his way in. He's dressed very  
formally and shakes Violet and Klaus's hands.

MR. POE  
I'm sure they will.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

52.

CYRANO

(baffled)

What are you doing here? Please  
return to your seat, sir.

MR. POE

I just wanted to tell the children  
to break a leg.

KLAUS

(distracted/alarmed)

What?

MR. POE

It's a theater term. It means,  
"good luck on tonight's  
performance." I'm glad you children  
have adjusted to life with Count  
Olaf.

KLAUS

(quickly)

Mr. Poe, Violet and I have to tell  
you something. It's very important.

Cyrano grunts and starts to pull Klaus away.

MR. POE

What is it?

COUNT OLAF (O.S.)

Yes, what *is* it you have to tell  
Mr. Poe, children?

Count Olaf has squeezed his way into the parade. He glares  
at the children, and he's still holding the walkie-talkie.

KLAUS

(weakly)

Just that we appreciate all you've  
done for us, Mr. Poe. That's all we  
wanted to say.

Mr. Poe pats him on the back and shakes Count Olaf's hand.

MR. POE

Of course, of course. Well, I had  
better take my seat.

COUNT OLAF

Yes, you really should.  
(quietly)  
Idiot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

53.

MR. POE

What?

COUNT OLAF

Nothing.

MR. POE

Well, break a leg, Baudelaires!

He heads back to his seat, coughing.

KLAUS

(to Violet)

I wish we *could* break a leg.

COUNT OLAF

(menacingly)

You will, soon enough.

INT./EXT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - TOWER - NIGHT

Sunny stands gripping the bars in her cage, which is still swaying in the breeze.

In the distance, she sees the bright lights of the amphitheater. Fernald leans his head out the window to get a glimpse as well; Sunny gives him a dirty look. A gong sounds--the final act is beginning.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

Orlando and Justice Strauss are on stage--Justice Strauss is behind a LECTERN and Orlando rings the gong one last time.

The wedding parade makes its way down the aisle while the audience cheers. Stella and Blanche play FLUTES while Cyrano holds Klaus by the arm and prods him along. The flower petal cannons are fired, and petals rain down on the actors and the audience.

In the center of the parade are Violet and Count Olaf. Violet looks sad and severe, but her head is held high. Count Olaf is hamming it up: waving, shaking hands, kissing cheeks. He's still holding the walkie-talkie, which no one seems to notice.

Other extras in the parade wave PALM BRANCHES and pound on DRUMS.

As the parade reaches the stage and Count Olaf and Violet mount the stairs, two FIREBREATHERS create a fiery "X" over their heads.

INT./EXT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - TOWER - NIGHT

Sunny and Fernald gaze in bewilderment at the amphitheater.

SUNNY

Whoa.

FERNALD

Whoa.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER - STAGE - NIGHT

As the actors settle on stage, FIREWORKS go off.

The crowd cheers and applauds.

After a few indulgent seconds, Count Olaf gives a wave to silence them.

Justice Strauss opens her law book.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

(clearly reading, nervous)

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to join this man and this woman in holy matrimony.

(to Count Olaf)

Do you take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, 'til death do you part?

COUNT OLAF

I do. I most certainly do.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

(to Violet)

And do you take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband?

Violet's eyes are wide and brimming with tears. She hesitates.

VIOLET

(sadly)

Justice Strauss, I--

Count Olaf starts to press a button on his walkie-talkie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

55.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I do.

The audience swoons. Justice Strauss smiles weakly and pulls a piece of PARCHMENT and QUILL from behind the lectern.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Then I now pronounce you man and wife. Now, the bride and groom will sign the marriage license.

Count Olaf grabs the quill eagerly and signs his name sloppily.

He passes it to Violet, who drops it absentmindedly. Count Olaf looks furious.

Violet looks back and forth between him and Justice Strauss, and then looks out into the distance at where Sunny is.

She bends down to get the quill and closes her eyes.

SERIES OF SHOTS - FLASHBACK

A) Violet skips a rock at Briny Beach with her right hand

B) Cover of *Nuptial Law*

KLAUS (V.O.)

The only legal requirements of marriage in this city are your saying "I do," and signing a document in your own hand in the presence of a judge--like Justice Strauss!

C) Violet throws her grappling hook with her right hand

D) Justice Strauss smiles at Violet

JUSTICE STRAUSS (V.O.)

Sometimes, simplest is best.

E) Violet ties her hair back in a ribbon at Briny Beach

BACK TO SCENE

Count Olaf taps his foot impatiently, and presses the button on his walkie-talkie.

Violet quickly picks up the quill, stands up, and signs the parchment slowly and shakily with her left hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

56.

COUNT OLAF

(triumphantly)

And now, ladies and gentlemen, I have an announcement. There is no reason to continue tonight's performance. This has not been a scene of fiction. My marriage to Violet Baudelaire is perfectly legal, and I am now in control of her entire fortune.

There are gasps in the audience, and some of the extras on stage look at one another in shock.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

No! That can't be!

COUNT OLAF

Oh, but it is. You performed the legal ceremony, and we signed a marriage license.

(gesturing to the audience)

And all of you are witnesses!

Justice Strauss takes the document and looks it over. She closes her eyes and furrows her brow, thinking hard. She sighs.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

You're right. This marriage, unfortunately, is completely legal. You both said "I do" and signed this document. Count Olaf, you are Violet's husband, and therefore in complete control of her estate.

MR. POE (O.S.)

That can't be!

Mr. Poe makes his way down the aisle and onto the stage, coughing all the way.

MR. POE (CONT'D)

This is dreadful nonsense!

JUSTICE STRAUSS

I'm afraid this dreadful nonsense is the law.

Her eyes fill with tears.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

57.

JUSTICE STRAUSS (CONT'D)  
I can't believe how easily I was  
tricked. I would never do anything  
to harm you children. *Never.*

KLAUS  
(to Count Olaf)  
Now let Sunny go! You promised to  
let her go!

MR. POE  
Where is Sunny?

COUNT OLAF  
She's all tied up at the moment, if  
you will pardon a hilarious joke.

He presses the button on the walkie-talkie, calling Fernald.

COUNT OLAF  
Fernald, please remove Sunny from  
her cage and bring her to the  
theater. She and Klaus have some  
chores to do before they go to bed.  
(to Klaus)  
Satisfied?

KLAUS  
Yes.

MR. POE  
Well, I'm not satisfied at *all*.  
This is absolutely horrendous! This  
is completely monstrous!  
This is financially dreadful!

COUNT OLAF  
It is, however, legally binding.  
Mr. Poe, I'll be at the bank  
tomorrow morning to withdraw the  
entirety of the Baudelaire fortune.

Mr. Poe opens his mouth to speak, but coughs first.

VIOLET  
Begging your pardon, but I think  
you may be wrong.

The audience gasps. All eyes are on Violet.

COUNT OLAF  
What did you say, my contessa?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

58.

VIOLET  
(testily)  
That I'm not your contessa. At  
least, I don't think I am.

COUNT OLAF  
And why is that?

VIOLET  
I did not sign the document in my  
own hand, as the law states.

COUNT OLAF  
(eyebrow raised)  
What do you mean? We all saw you!  
And your hand!

VIOLET  
Like most people, I'm right-handed.  
But I signed the document with my  
left hand.

COUNT OLAF  
*What?*

He snatches the parchment from Justice Strauss to examine  
it.

COUNT OLAF (CONT'D)  
(to Violet)  
You are a *liar*!

KLAUS  
(excitedly)  
No she's not. I remember, because I  
watched her left hand trembling as  
she signed her name.

COUNT OLAF  
It is impossible to prove. A small  
detail like that doesn't matter in  
the least.

JUSTICE STRAUSS  
Count Olaf, I think it's up to me  
to determine that. Let me see.

She closes her eyes again, her brow furrowed. Everyone waits  
with bated breath. Finally, she smiles.

JUSTICE STRAUSS (CONT'D)  
If Violet is indeed right-handed,  
and she signed the document with  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

59.

JUSTICE STRAUSS (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
her left hand, then it follows that  
the requirements of the nuptial  
laws are not truly fulfilled. The  
law clearly states the document  
must be signed in the bride's *own*  
*hand*. Therefore, this marriage is  
invalid.

COUNT OLAF  
That's ridiculous! And weird!

JUSTICE STRAUSS  
Law is weird, Count Olaf.

Someone in the audience applauds, and soon everyone does.

SUNNY (O.S.)  
Neepo!

Sunny crawls onto the stage, Fernald following behind her.  
Klaus swoops her up and hugs her.

Violet joins them. Count Olaf roars in rage and points at  
Violet.

COUNT OLAF  
You may not be my wife, but you are  
still my daughter, and--

MR. POE  
Do you honestly think that I will  
allow you to continue to care for  
these children, after the treachery  
I have seen tonight?

COUNT OLAF  
The orphans are mine. There's  
nothing illegal about trying to  
marry your adopted daughter.

JUSTICE STRAUSS  
But there *is* something illegal  
about putting an infant in a cage.  
You will go to jail, Olaf, and the  
children will live with me.

The audience cheers again, and begins heckling Olaf. Mr. Poe  
grabs Count Olaf's arm.

MR. POE  
I hereby arrest you in the name of  
the law.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

60.

VIOLET

Oh, Justice Strauss, can we really  
come live with you?

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Of course. I am very fond of you  
children, and I feel responsible  
for your welfare.

KLAUS

Can we use the library every day?

VIOLET

Can we work in the garden?

SUNNY

Cake!

Everybody laughs, basking in Count Olaf's defeat.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)

It is here that I feel obliged to  
interrupt and remind you that the  
story of the Baudelaires is not a  
happy one. You can turn this off  
now and believe that it is. You can  
spend the rest of your life  
believing that the Baudelaires  
triumphed over Count Olaf and lived  
happily with Justice Strauss.

All the lights in the amphitheater go out and it's plunged  
into darkness. The only light is from the moon. People  
scream.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.) [CONT'D]

But it is not so.

People scramble about in the darkness.

Count Olaf appears behind Violet and puts his hand on her  
shoulder.

COUNT OLAF

(whispered to Violet)

I'll get my hands on your fortune  
if it's the last thing I do. And  
when I have it, I'll kill you and  
your siblings with my own two  
hands.

Violet shudders. The lights come back on. The children, Mr.  
Poe, and Justice Strauss look around--Count Olaf and his  
troupe are gone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

61.

MR. POE

They're gone! Count Olaf and his  
troupe--they're gone!

The audience gasps, and everyone begins searching for Count  
Olaf and his troupe.

Violet throws off her wig in disappointment.

MR. POE (CONT'D)

Rats! I'm going to call the police  
immediately!

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Well, let's go home, children. We  
can worry about this in the  
morning.

MR. POE

Wait a minute. I'm sorry to tell  
you this, children, but I cannot  
allow you to be raised by someone  
who is not a relative.

VIOLET

What? After all Justice Strauss has  
done for us?

KLAUS

Without Justice Strauss and her  
library, Count Olaf would have  
succeeded! We would have lost our  
lives!

MR. POE

That may be so, and I thank Justice  
Strauss for her generosity, but  
your parents' will is very  
specific. I'll begin working on new  
arrangements for you tomorrow. I'm  
sorry, but that's just the way it  
is.

The children look at Justice Strauss. All four have tears in  
their eyes. Justice Strauss hugs them sadly and then sighs.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

Mr. Poe is right. We must respect  
your parents' wishes. Don't you  
want to do what your parents  
wanted?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

62.

VIOLET

You're right, Justice Strauss.  
We're just going to miss you very  
much.

JUSTICE STRAUSS

I will miss you too. Maybe we'll  
see each other again someday.

Tears stream down Justice Strauss's face as she gives them  
all one last hug.

Mr. Poe shepherds the children away from the amphitheater  
and toward his car.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

The Baudelaires pile into the back seat of Mr. Poe's car.

As the car begins to pull away, they wave one last time at  
Justice Strauss.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)

To Violet, Klaus, and Sunny, it  
seemed that Mr. Poe and the law had  
made the incorrect decision to take  
them away from a life of happiness  
with Justice Strauss and toward an  
unknown fate with an unknown  
relative.

INT. MR. POE'S CAR - NIGHT

Violet, Klaus, and Sunny are nestled together in the back  
seat. They look sad, but resilient.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.) [CONT'D]

They didn't understand it, but like  
so many unfortunate events in life,  
just because you don't understand  
it doesn't mean it isn't so. And  
for the three resilient--a word  
which here means "plucky, talented,  
and independent"--Baudelaire  
children, this was a bad beginning,  
but it was also the beginning of  
something new.

FADE OUT

END OF SHOW

A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS

"Deception!"

Written by

Ryan Pait

Based on the works of

Lemony Snicket

FADE IN:

COLD OPEN

EXT. DARK AVENUE - DAY

VIOLET, KLAUS, and SUNNY walk down the sidewalk with MR. POE. Enormous TREES line the sidewalk rather than street lamps--so tall and massive that Dark Avenue is really in darkness.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
There is a big difference between the words "nervous" and "anxious." Nervous means "worried about something," whereas anxious means "troubled by disturbing suspense." Although the words are different, they are similar in that they both apply to the Baudelaire children in this episode of their lives.

Mr. Poe and the children come to a halt in front of a towering APARTMENT BUILDING. Mr. Poe turns toward the children.

MR. POE  
I imagine you must be nervous. I realize some of your previous guardians have caused a little trouble, but I think MR. and MRS. SQUALOR will provide you with a proper home here on Dark Avenue.

VIOLET  
We're not nervous. I think we're too anxious to be nervous.

MR. POE  
"Anxious" and "nervous" mean the same thing. And what do you have to be anxious about, anyway?

VIOLET  
COUNT OLAF, of course.

MR. POE  
Count Olaf? Don't worry about him. He'll never find you here.

Violet, Klaus, and Sunny exchange a look and sigh.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

2.

KLAUS

It's hard not to worry about Olaf.  
He has our friends in his clutches.

EXT. PRUFROCK PREPARATORY ACADEMY - FRONT LAWN - DAY -  
FLASHBACK

STELLA and BLANCHE, the white-faced women, stuff the  
QUAGMIRE triplets--ISADORA and DUNCAN--into the back of  
Count Olaf's car.

Duncan manages to poke his head out the window as the car  
roars.

DUNCAN

(screaming)  
Baudelaires, V.F.D.! V.F.D.!

BACK TO SCENE

MR. POE

Well, you don't have to worry about  
the Quagmires either. I don't know  
if you happen to read the Mulctuary  
Money Management newsletter, but I  
have some very good news about your  
friends.

SUNNY

Gavu?

VIOLET

The Quagmires have been rescued?

MR. POE

Better than that. I have been  
promoted. I am now the bank's Vice  
President in Charge of Orphan  
Affairs, which means that I am in  
charge of your situation and the  
Quagmires' situation. There is a  
rumor that they've been spotted on  
a mountain peak, so I'll be leaving  
in a helicopter soon to  
investigate. Now, can any of you  
see the number on this building?

They all look up at the building's looming facade.

KLAUS

I think it says 667.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

3.

A door swings open in front of them, held open by the DOORMAN. The sleeves of his coat go past his hands and the brim of his hat covers most of his face in shadow.

DOORMAN

Are you the Baudelaires?

MR. POE

Yes, and I am Mr. Poe. I'm in charge of their affairs. JEROME and ESME Squalor live here, correct?

DOORMAN

Oh, yes. They told me you were arriving today. Come on in.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - LOBBY - DAY

It's just as dark in the lobby. There are a few scattered candles on the floor and a pair of elevator doors.

DOORMAN

Sorry if it's hard to see in here, but dark is in right now.

VIOLET

In what?

DOORMAN

Just "in." Around here, something is either "in," which means that it's stylish and appealing, or "out," which means it's not.

MR. POE

Dark is in, huh? Wait until I tell my wife. Mr. and Mrs. Squalor said they live in the penthouse, correct?

DOORMAN

Yes, that's right. You'll have to use the stairs, though.

VIOLET

Is the elevator out of order? I'm good with mechanical devices, and I'd be happy to take a look at it.

DOORMAN

That's a kind and unusual offer, but the elevator isn't out of order. It's just out right now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

4.

He leads them across the lobby. They all stand in front of a long, curved STAIRCASE made out of dark wood. There are candles placed sporadically. It's extraordinarily dark and vast.

MR. POE

It looks like a long walk.

DOORMAN

It is. It's either 48 or 84 floors.

MR. POE

Well, either way, I don't have time to take you up. I'm sorry, children.

KLAUS

You're not coming with us?

MR. POE

I'm supposed to be leaving on my search for the Quagmires. I suppose I could delay--

VIOLET

No, no. We'll be fine. Goodbye, Mr. Poe.

MR. POE

Goodbye, children. Hopefully I'll have good news about the Quagmires for you soon.

DOORMAN

There is one good thing about this staircase.

He walks Mr. Poe to the front door.

DOORMAN (CONT'D)

It's all uphill from here.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)

But he was also wrong. For the Baudelaires, things, like usual, were all downhill from here.

The children look worried as they begin to climb the staircase. Mr. Poe and the doorman laugh, and it seems ominous. The screen goes black.

END OF COLD OPEN

5.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE LANDING - DAY

The Baudelaires emerge from the darkness onto the landing.

It's a little brighter up here. The children look around. There's a massive door, and two sets of ELEVATOR DOORS. The children are out of breath.

VIOLET

Just think, if elevators were in,  
we would have arrived here in  
minutes.

KLAUS

Well, maybe they'll be back in  
soon.

Klaus knocks on the massive door. It swings open to reveal Jerome Squalor (30s/40s), one of their new guardians. He's wearing a pinstripe suit and looks kind.

JEROME

Oh, good! I thought I heard  
footsteps. My name is Jerome  
Squalor, and I'm so happy you've  
come to stay with us. Come on in.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The living room is modern and luxurious, but also dim. There are plush couches and a minibar.

JEROME

First things first--you can just  
call me Jerome. Would any of you  
like a nice, cold martini?

KLAUS

Don't martinis have alcohol in  
them?

JEROME

Normally, yes. But right now,  
aqueous martinis are in. It's just  
cold water served in a fancy glass  
with an olive in it.

VIOLET

Oh. In that case, we can try them.

JEROME

Ah! You're adventurous.

He begins making the martinis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

6.

JEROME (CONT'D)

Just like your mother, actually.  
She and I were good friends a ways  
back. We hiked up Mount Fraught  
with some friends. It's known for  
having dangerous animals on it, but  
your mother wasn't afraid. But  
then, swooping out of the sky--

ESMÉ (O.S.)

Jerome, who are you talking to?

JEROME

It's the Baudelaires!

ESMÉ (30s/40s) enters the room and strikes a pose, her hand  
on her hip. She's also wearing a pinstripe suit, and she's  
undeniably glamorous.

ESMÉ

Hello, children. I'm Esmé Gigi  
Geniveve Squalor, the city's sixth  
most important financial advisor.  
I'm very happy you're here, because  
orphans are in. All our friends  
will be sick with jealousy!

JEROME

(a little embarrassed)

I sure hope not.

The Baudelaires try to absorb it all. Esmé is a little much.

JEROME (CONT'D)

I don't like to hear of anyone  
getting sick. Have a seat,  
children, and we'll tell you a bit  
about your new home.

As they take a seat, Jerome hands them their martinis. Esmé  
looks at the children hungrily.

ESMÉ

Children, this is what you need to  
know. Dark is in. Light is out.  
Stairs are in. Elevators are out.  
Pinstripes are in. Those horrible  
clothes you are wearing are out.

JEROME

What Esmé means, Baudelaires, is  
that we want you to feel as  
comfortable here as possible.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

7.

The children sip nervously at their drinks that Jerome has handed them.

VIOLET  
That's very nice of you.

JEROME  
Mr. Poe told me about some of your  
previous guardians.

SERIES OF SHOTS - FLASHBACK

INT. UNCLE MONTY'S HOUSE - REPTILE ROOM - DAY

A) UNCLE MONTY's cold, dead hand is draped over an armchair

EXT. LAKE LACHRYMOSE - DAY

B) Count Olaf shoves AUNT JOSEPHINE into LAKE LACHRYMOSE,  
and she screams as she begins to be devoured by leeches

INT. LUCKY SMELLS LUMBERMILL - DAY

C) DR. GEORGINA ORWELL's coat gets caught in a buzz saw, and  
she is yanked backwards into its path

INT. PRUFROCK PREPARATORY SCHOOL - ORPHANS' SHACK - DAY

D) VICE PRINCIPAL NERO stands with his arms childishly  
crossed.

VICE PRINCIPAL NERO  
(petulantly)  
You're expelled! And Sunny, you're  
fired!

BACK TO SCENE

JEROME (CONT'D)  
I feel awful that you've had such  
terrible experiences, and that we  
could have cared for you the entire  
time.

ESMÉ  
It couldn't be helped. When  
something is out, it's out, and  
orphans used to be out.

JEROME  
We've heard all about Count Olaf,  
too. I told the doorman not to let  
anyone in who looks even vaguely  
like him, so you should be safe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

8.

KLAUS

That's a relief.

ESMÉ

That dreadful man is supposed to be up on some mountain, anyway. Remember, Jerome? Mr. Poe said he was going away in a helicopter to find those twins he kidnapped.

VIOLET

Actually, the Quagmires are triplets. They're good friends of ours.

ESMÉ

Well, if he finds them soon, maybe we'll adopt them, too. Five orphans! I'll be the inmost person in town!

Violet smiles at her.

JEROME

We would certainly have room for them. This is a seventy-one bedroom apartment, children. I'll show you the ones we've picked for you.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Jerome and the children stand in front of three open doors. The rooms inside are huge.

JEROME

Violet, this one on the left will be perfect for you. There's all kinds of tools for making inventions. Klaus, yours is on the right, and it's right next to the library. Sunny, yours is right in the middle.

VIOLET

It all looks splendid, Jerome. Thank you.

Esmé comes running down the hall.

ESMÉ

Jerome! Children! Excellent news!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

9.

KLAUS

The Quagmires have been found?

ESMÉ

Who? Oh, no, not that. Listen--dark  
is out! Regular light is in!

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - VIOLET'S BEDROOM - DAY

She rushes into the bedrooms and begins turning on all the  
lights.

Jerome and the children step in behind her and they all look  
out the windows--the trees on the street are already being  
cut down.

ESMÉ (CONT'D)

Thank goodness they're cutting  
those trees down. I can't stand  
things that aren't in.

JEROME

Well, children, we'll let you get  
settled. Come down for dinner once  
you're ready.

Esmé leads him out of the room.

The children stare out at the toppling trees, unsure of how  
to feel.

KLAUS

What happens to us when orphans are  
no longer in?

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Jerome mixes salad in a large bowl, as the Baudelaires sit  
at the table listening to Esmé talk about her day.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)

Although the phrase "a mixed bag"  
sometimes refers to a plastic bag  
that has been stirred in a bowl,  
more often it is used to describe a  
situation that has both good and  
bad parts. And for the Baudelaires,  
their first few days with the  
Squalors were one of the most mixed  
bags they had yet encountered.

SERIES OF SHOTS - MOS



10.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - VIOLET'S BEDROOM - DAY

A) Violet examines the tool bench in her room--there are no tools. There's a note from Esmé that reads, "Tools are OUT. - E" She frowns.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - LIBRARY - DAY

B) Klaus examines the books in the library. They're all about what's been in and out in history, with titles like "Boots Were In in 1812" or "Trout: In France They're Out". He frowns.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - SUNNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

C) Sunny chews on the toys in her room. They're all designed for softer-toothed babies. She frowns.

BACK TO SCENE

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.) [CONT'D]  
The enormous nature of the  
penthouse also meant that it was  
hard for the children to spend time  
with one another or with Jerome.

SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - VIOLET'S BEDROOM - DAY

A) Violet opens the door from her room.

VIOLET  
Sunny?

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - KITCHEN 1 - DAY

B) Klaus is in one of the many kitchens. He pokes his head out into the hallway.

KLAUS  
Violet?

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

C) Sunny crawls down one of the many hallways.

SUNNY  
Hello?

BACK TO SCENE

Esmé is still droning on about her day as Jerome serves the salad and takes a seat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

11.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
But what really mixed the  
Baudelaires' bag was the thought  
that the Quagmire triplets were  
experiencing things that were much,  
much worse.

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - DAY/NIGHT

Isadora and Duncan sit shivering in darkness. They lean  
forward, and BARS block out their faces.

BACK TO SCENE

ESMÉ  
Anyway, I'm very, very tired of  
discussing your twin friends. I  
know you're worried, but it's  
boring and rude to keep blabbing on  
about it.

VIOLET  
(politely)  
We didn't mean to bore you.

JEROME  
Of course you didn't. The children  
are just concerned, Esmé. Mr. Poe  
is doing all he can, but maybe we  
can put our heads together and find  
a way to help.

ESMÉ  
I don't have time to put my head  
together! The In Auction is coming  
up, and I have to make sure it's a  
success.

KLAUS  
The In Auction?

JEROME  
An auction is a sort of sale--

ESMÉ  
(snapping her fingers)  
They know what an auction is.

The children smile politely at Jerome.

ESMÉ (CONT'D)  
The most important part about the  
In Auction is that we're only  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

12.

ESMÉ (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
selling things that are in. I  
always organize it, and it's one of  
the most smashing events of the  
year! And it's only a few days  
away.

SUNNY  
Smashi.

Esmé beams at Sunny.

ESMÉ  
Yes, smashing! We hold the auction  
at VEBLEN HALL, and all the money  
goes to a good cause.

VIOLET  
That's nice. What cause?

ESMÉ  
Me! Every last bit of it! Now isn't  
that *smashing*?

She puts her hand on her heart, radiating pride.

JEROME  
Actually, dear, I was thinking that  
this year we could give the money  
to another good cause.

ESMÉ  
Don't talk nonsense. If we make  
enough money, we could buy a new  
penthouse!

Jerome slumps, a little exasperated.

JEROME  
But we just moved in a few weeks  
ago. I'd rather spend some money on  
putting the elevator back in use.

ESMÉ  
(snappy)  
There you go, talking nonsense  
again. I don't have time for any  
more chitchat. GUNTHER is stopping  
by tonight, so I want you to take  
the children out to dinner, Jerome.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

13.

JEROME

Who is Gunther, again?

ESMÉ

We've been over this. Gunther's the auctioneer. He's supposed to be the innest auctioneer in town. He's coming over to discuss the auction catalog, and we don't want to be disturbed. I already made a reservation for you and the children at CAFÉ SALMONELLA for seven o'clock. You'll have plenty of time to walk down all those stairs. But before you leave, children, I have a present for each of you.

The children, who have been observing this conversation silently, look surprised.

Esmé goes into the hall and returns with three bags that read "In Boutique" in script. She hands them to the Baudelaires with an elegant gesture.

ESMÉ (CONT'D)

I thought if I bought you something you really wanted, you might shut up about the Quagmires.

JEROME

What Esmé means is that we want you to be happy here in our home, even when you're worried about your friends.

ESMÉ

That's not what I mean at all. Open the bags, kids.

The children begin opening their presents.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)

There are multiple ways of saying "oh." One way, with an exclamation point, conveys excitement. The other, with a comma or period after it, conveys slight disappointment.

The children pull PINSTRIPE CLOTHING out of their bags.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

14.

VIOLET

Oh.

KLAUS

Oh.

SUNNY

Oh.

ESMÉ

(thrilled)

Pinstripes! I knew you'd be excited. Pinstripes are in, orphans are in--imagine just how in you'll be when you're orphans wearing pinstripes! No wonder you're so excited! I can tell from the way you all said, "Oh!"

JEROME

I don't think they sounded very excited. I thought we were going to get presents for them more suited to their interests?

ESMÉ

I know we discussed that, but everything they're interested *in* is *out*. Don't you want what's best for them?

JEROME

(repentant)

Of course. I hadn't thought of it that way.

VIOLET

Really, Esmé and Jerome, thank you.

KLAUS

Yes, thank you. We'll go put our new clothes on before dinner.

JEROME

(smiling)

You're very welcome.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - HALLWAY- DAY

The children stand in the hallway outside their bedrooms, decked out in their pinstripes.

VIOLET  
Well, that was uncomfortable.

SUNNY  
Yup.

KLAUS  
Agreed. It's almost worse knowing we might have gotten presents that we liked.

VIOLET  
Listen to us. We sound spoiled.

KLAUS  
You're right. We should be grateful. Especially when our friends are in such terrible danger.

He pauses, and then smiles.

KLAUS (CONT'D)  
And just think about how *in* we are now.

The children laugh together as the doorbell rings.

ESMÉ (O.S.)  
Orphans! Get the door please!  
Jerome and I are getting dressed!

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - FOYER - DAY

The children come down a hallway and into the foyer, still smiling. They open the door.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
There is a chart called the periodic table of the elements, and scientists like to say that it contains all the substances that make up our world. Like everyone else, scientists are wrong from time to time. There is an element missing on the periodic table, and it is a very important one: the element of surprise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

16.

Gunther (30s/40s) comes into full view. He's wearing a pinstripe suit, a MONOCLE, and shiny riding BOOTS. He's also very obviously Count Olaf.

GUNTHER

Hello, please.

The children are absolutely speechless. Sunny's jaw drops.

GUNTHER (CONT'D)

You must be children, please. The name of mine is Gunther. Please excuse the talking of me. Please, I am not fluent in the English.

VIOLET

How--

KLAUS

Where--

SUNNY

Bik--

Gunther smiles horribly.

GUNTHER

I see you are not fluent in the English either, please. Where is the mother and father?

ESMÉ (O.S.)

We're not the mother and father.

Esmé and Jerome walk into the foyer, wearing new pinstripes.

JEROME

We are their legal guardians. Violet, Klaus, and Sunny are orphans.

GUNTHER

Ah! Orphans in!

ESMÉ

I know orphans are in. In fact, they're so in, they ought to be auctioned off next week at the big event!

Jerome looks shocked.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

17.

JEROME

Esmé! We're not going to auction  
off the children.

ESMÉ

Of course we're not. It's against  
the law to auction off children.  
Come along, Gunther. Jerome,  
children, have fun at dinner.

GUNTHER

I am happy to meet you, please,  
Purple, Katz, and Sunshine.

VIOLET

(defiantly)

We've met you before. *Many* times  
before. Jerome, Esmé, this man is  
an impostor. He's Count Olaf.

GUNTHER

I am not understanding, please,  
what Purple is saying.

KLAUS

Yes you are. You speak perfect  
English.

SUNNY

Aha!

VIOLET

They're right. His improper English  
is just part of his disguise, just  
like his boots and his monocle. If  
he takes them off--

ESMÉ

(impatiently)

Gunther is one of the innest  
auctioneers in the world, and I'm  
not going to make him get undressed  
just to make you feel better.

JEROME

Esmé, how can we be sure this man  
is really who he says he is?  
Perhaps we should--

ESMÉ

(pointing to herself)

*Perhaps* we should listen to me. I  
am Esmé Gigi Geniveve Squalor, the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

18.

ESMÉ (cont'd)  
city's sixth most important  
financial advisor.

JEROME  
I know that, dear. We're married.

INT. VEBLEN HALL - DAY - FLASHBACK

Jerome slips a wedding band onto Esmé's finger.

MR. and MRS. BAUDELAIRE stand at their sides--the best man  
and maid of honor.

BACK TO SCENE

GUNTHER  
It is okay, please. The children  
are confused.

VIOLET  
We're not confused, Olaf.

Esmé glares at Violet.

ESMÉ  
You and your siblings will call  
this man Gunther, or you will make  
me very, very sorry I ever took you  
into my glamorous home.

The children look at each other. Violet takes a deep breath.

VIOLET  
(smiling at Gunther)  
I'm sorry, Gunther.

KLAUS  
But--  
(reconsidering)  
That's right. We thought you were  
someone else, sir.

GUNTHER  
It is okay, please.

JEROME  
Isn't it so much nicer when no  
one's arguing? Come on, children.  
Let's go to dinner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

19.

ESMÉ

Yes, goodbye. Please don't  
embarrass me like that ever again,  
children.

She sweeps Jerome and the children forward with a gentle  
push and slams the front door behind them.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE LANDING - DAY

JEROME

That was very nice of you to stop  
arguing. I could tell you weren't  
completely convinced about Gunther,  
but I know what we can do to set  
your minds at ease.

The children look at each other and smile in relief.

VIOLET

(relieved)

Oh, thank you, Jerome. What did you  
have in mind?

JEROME

Instead of climbing down all those  
stairs, we're going to slide down  
the banister. Come on, Baudelaires!

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - STAIRWELL - DAY

Jerome slides down the banister in the now fully illuminated  
stairwell, smiling all the way.

The children trail him, their hair whipping behind them.  
They do not look at ease.

INT. CAFÉ SALMONELLA - NIGHT

The children sit in awkward silence with Jerome at CAFÉ  
SALMONELLA. All of the decor is salmon-themed--even the  
waiters wear salmon costumes.

JEROME

Frankly, Baudelaires, I think you  
should be a little ashamed of your  
suspicions. Do you know what the  
word "xenophobe" means?

Violet and Sunny defer to Klaus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

20.

KLAUS

When a word ends in -phobe, it usually means somebody who is afraid of something. Does "xeno" mean Count Olaf?

JEROME

No. A xenophobe is someone who is afraid of people because they come from a different country. You children are far too sensible to be xenophobic.

VIOLET

Jerome, it's not that--

JEROME

(talking over Violet)

I don't mean to scold you. But Count Olaf wouldn't dare come to our fancy neighborhood. The doorman will spot him and alert the authorities immediately if he does.

KLAUS

The doorman didn't spot him.

JEROME

(raising his hands in defeat)

Please don't argue with me. I can't stand arguing.

VIOLET

But sometimes it's useful and necessary to argue.

JEROME

I can't think of a single argument that would be useful or necessary. Someday, when you're older, you'll understand. Now, let's go home.

EXT. DARK AVENUE - NIGHT

Jerome and the Baudelaires step out of a taxi onto Dark Avenue. The sun has set completely, and Dark Avenue is dark once again.

The doorman is waiting outside.

DOORMAN

You're back already?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

21.

JEROME  
(glancing at his watch)  
It's quite late.

DOORMAN  
Mrs. Squalor said you were not  
supposed to return until your guest  
left the apartment, and he hasn't  
come down yet.

JEROME  
That's odd. The children should be  
in bed soon, though.

DOORMAN  
I had very strict instructions.  
Nobody is supposed to enter the  
penthouse until Gunther leaves the  
building, which he definitely has  
not done.

JEROME  
I don't want to argue, but maybe  
he's on his way down the stairs  
now.

DOORMAN  
I never thought of that. I guess  
you can go on up, then. Maybe  
you'll run into him on the stairs.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE LANDING - DAY

Esmé is waiting for them on the landing.

ESMÉ  
How was dinner?

JEROME  
Good. Where's Gunther?

ESMÉ  
He left hours ago. We went over  
some details for the auction and  
looked over the auction catalog,  
and then he left.

JEROME  
But that can't be.

ESMÉ  
Of course it can be! He walked  
right out this door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

22.

Everyone looks confused.

KLAUS

Did he take the elevator when he left?

Esmé's eyes get big, and she opens her mouth a few times without speaking.

ESMÉ

(quickly)

Of course not. The elevator's been shut down.

JEROME

Well, there's no use arguing about it. Let's all go to bed.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - VIOLET'S BEDROOM - DAY

It's morning. The children sit in Violet's bedroom, tired from a sleepless night.

KLAUS

It's terrible enough that Olaf has shown up again, and that we have to call him Gunther. But we don't have the faintest clue what he's planning. Do you think the Squalors are working with him?

VIOLET

I don't think so. They've been very kind to us. Or Jerome has, at least. And they don't need our money. They have so much already.

KLAUS

But not much common sense. Gunther completely fooled them with his stupid disguise.

SUNNY

Klofy!

VIOLET

He also fooled them into thinking he had left.

KLAUS

That has me fooled, too. How could he have left without the doorman noticing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

23.

VIOLET

I don't know. It's like a jigsaw puzzle, but there are too many missing pieces.

The door opens, and Jerome and Esmé enter. Jerome's carrying a tray with toast, eggs, and orange juice on it.

JEROME

Did you say jigsaw puzzle? I know we have some, I just don't remember which game room they're in.

KLAUS

Violet was just using an expression. We're trying to figure something out.

JEROME

Well, you'll never do it on an empty stomach. Have some breakfast.

VIOLET

Thank you, Jerome.

ESMÉ

(bored)

You'll be on your own today, children. I have a meeting with the King of Arizona, and Jerome has to go buy parsley soda. It's in now! Aqueous martinis are OUT.

JEROME

Anyway, we must get going. There's food in all of the kitchens, so you can make yourselves lunch. We'll be back by dinner.

ESMÉ

Yup. Bye, kids.

She grabs Jerome by the arm and marches him out the door. The children hear the front door slam.

KLAUS

We have to search the penthouse. Olaf might still be here, and now we're all alone. How can we search it without getting lost?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

24.

SUNNY

Hansel!

Violet and Klaus stare at one another. They can usually understand Sunny, but not now.

Sunny points at the toast.

VIOLET

Do you mean we should draw a map?

SUNNY

(shaking her head)

Gretel!

Violet and Klaus look at each other again.

KLAUS

(realizing)

Oh! Hansel and Gretel. That brother and sister who insist on wandering around the woods by themselves.

VIOLET

And they leave that trail of bread crumbs, so they don't get lost.

They all smile, and Violet gives Sunny a hug.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Violet walks into a kitchen, leaving bread crumbs behind her. She whips open all the cabinets and even the fridge, but finds nothing. She frowns.

B) Klaus stands in a billiard room with big, heavy curtains. He whips them all to the side. Nothing. He frowns.

C) Sunny crawls into one of the many bathrooms, nibbling on the toast and leaving crumbs behind her. She peers over the cavernous bathtub--nothing. She opens the toilet--nothing. She frowns.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The children sit in one of the living rooms, exhausted from their search.

KLAUS

Well, that was a bust.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

25.

VIOLET

Maybe he's in one of the other  
apartments? We could walk down the  
stairs and try and listen for him.  
We could talk to the doorman when  
we get to the lobby.

KLAUS

Well, it beats sitting around.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - STAIRWELL - DAY

The children tiptoe their way down the stairs, listening at  
every door and whispering to each other.

Looking defeated, they make their way into the lobby.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - LOBBY - DAY

The lobby has been completely redecorated. The walls are  
blue, the floor is covered with sand, and seashells are  
placed everywhere.

The doorman is at his usual post. The children take a seat  
and begin to unpack the lunch they brought with them.

VIOLET

Well, that was fruitless.

KLAUS

Maybe he *is* in the penthouse, and  
we just didn't spot him.

SUNNY

Buh.

DOORMAN

How are you, children?

VIOLET

We're fine. We just thought we'd  
eat lunch down here in the lobby,  
and then hike back up.

DOORMAN

I'm sorry, but that means you're  
not allowed to go back up. Gunther  
has still not come down.

VIOLET

This doesn't make any sense. Esmé  
said that he left the penthouse,  
but you say that you haven't seen  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

26.

VIOLET (cont'd)  
him leave. It's a problem that  
doesn't have a solution.

DOORMAN  
Every problem has a solution.

He walks over to the elevator doors. He begins gluing a  
small wooden starfish to them.

DOORMAN (CONT'D)  
Sometimes it takes a long time to  
find the solution--even if it's  
right in front of your nose.

Violet and Sunny turn their attention back to their lunch,  
but Klaus stares at the elevator doors, his eyes growing  
wide.

EXT. DARK AVENUE - NIGHT

Esmé and Jerome step out of a cab, Jerome lugging a crate of  
PARSLEY SODA. The doorman greets them, and they all step  
into the lobby.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - LOBBY - NIGHT

Violet and Sunny are curled up taking a nap, but Klaus is  
still staring at the elevator doors.

JEROME  
Hello, children!

Violet and Sunny wake up.

VIOLET  
Hello, Jerome. Hello, Esmé.

SUNNY  
Jeresmé!

Klaus mumbles something.

JEROME  
What a pleasant surprise to find  
you down here. It'll be easier to  
climb all those stairs if we have  
you three for company.

DOORMAN  
I'm sorry, but Gunther still hasn't  
left.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

27.

ESMÉ

Don't be absurd. He left last night. What kind of doorman are you?

DOORMAN

Actually, I'm an actor.

Esmé rolls her eyes.

ESMÉ

Your instructions have changed. Your new instructions are to let me and my orphans go directly to my penthouse. Got it, buster?

DOORMAN

Got it.

ESMÉ

Good. Luckily for us, the King of Arizona told me elevators are back in. So our trip will be quick.

She walks over and presses the up button, and they step in.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Esmé gabs away as the elevator slowly ascends.

ESMÉ

The King of Arizona told me a long list of new things that are in. For one thing, grapefruits. Also, bright blue cereal bowls, high roof beams, billboards with weasels on them, bananafish, tires, dinghies, movies with waterfalls in them...

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

They all step into the foyer.

ESMÉ (CONT'D)

Oh, and yellow wallpaper! And triangular picture frames, Eskimos, very fancy doilies, sandwiches with no mayonnaise, garbage cans with letters of the alphabet on them, and--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

28.

KLAUS

Excuse me. I don't mean to interrupt, but my sisters and I are very tired. May we be excused to go to bed?

Esmé looks annoyed.

JEROME

Of course. You should get plenty of rest. The auction is tomorrow, so I'll take you to Veblen Hall at 10:30 sharp.

ESMÉ

No, you won't. Magenta paper clips are in, so I'll need you to go to the Stationery District as soon as the sun rises. I'll bring the children with me.

JEROME

(shrugging)

Well, I don't want to argue. Esmé, would you like to tuck in the children?

ESMÉ

Nope. I'll see you tomorrow, kids.

She waves dismissively.

VIOLET

Good night, Esmé and Jerome.

JEROME

Good night, children.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - VIOLET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The children settle down into a comfortable corner.

VIOLET

Okay, Klaus. I know you've been thinking very hard about something, because you've been doing that thing where you don't pay a bit of attention to your surroundings.

KLAUS

Unique habits like that are called idiosyncrasies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

29.

SUNNY

Stiblo!

KLAUS

Sorry. It's just that I think I've figured out where Gunther might be hiding. I need your help though, Violet.

VIOLET

All right.

KLAUS

Elevators only need one set of doors on each floor, right?

VIOLET

(realizing)

Yes. But the penthouse landing has two--

KLAUS

And I think one of those sets of doors is just an empty elevator shaft. Which would be the perfect hiding place for someone who doesn't want to be seen.

SUNNY

Aha!

KLAUS

Aha is right. Whatever Olaf is up to, the answer is behind that empty set of doors.

VIOLET

Let's go right this minute.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE LANDING - NIGHT

Violet examines the two sets of doors. One has a set of up and down buttons next to it, and the other only has a down button.

VIOLET

Why would you need an up button if you were already on the top floor?

She presses the up button. The children wait anxiously.

The doors open, and they peer inside. They all gasp.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

30.

KLAUS

I knew it! I knew the elevator was  
ersatz!

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)

"Ersatz" is a word that describes  
one thing pretending to be another,  
but the word might as well have  
meant "the most terrifying place  
the Baudelaires had ever seen."

The children continue to stare down--it's an EMPTY ELEVATOR  
SHAFT. They're intrigued by its complete darkness.

VIOLET

We have to go down there.

KLAUS

Look how dark it is. It's  
terrifying.

SUNNY

Yikes!

KLAUS

Why don't we tell the Squalors?

VIOLET

We don't have time to argue with  
them. Every minute we waste is a  
minute the Quagmires could be  
spending in Olaf's clutches.

KLAUS

(resolutely)

How are we going to go down?

VIOLET

(smiling)

We'll have to invent something.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Violet grabs handfuls of extension cords out of a closet,  
smiling triumphantly.

B) Klaus yanks curtain pulls from the many different living  
rooms, smiling triumphantly.

C) Sunny rifles through a drawer, pulling out a bunch of  
silk neckties.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

31.

SUNNY

Armani.

BACK TO SCENE

The children sit on the landing, tying their ersatz ROPE together.

Klaus stands up and looks into the elevator shaft. He shivers.

KLAUS

We've spent so much time trying to escape Count Olaf. I can't believe that now we're trying to find him.

VIOLET

Me neither. If it weren't for the Quagmires, I wouldn't go down there.

She picks up the rope and ties it to the knob on the Squalors' front door.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Time for the moment of truth.

She tosses the end of the rope down the elevator shaft. After a second, they hear a clink. They all walk over to the edge.

KLAUS

Are you ready?

SUNNY

No.

VIOLET

If we wait until we're ready, we'll be waiting for the rest of our lives. Let's go.

She blows on her hands and rubs them together. She begins lowering herself down, gripping the rope.

Klaus and Sunny look over the edge--it's almost impossible to see her.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Come on. It's okay.

Klaus and Sunny both blow on their hands and rub them together, and then begin lowering themselves down.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - ELEVATOR SHAFT - NIGHT

The children are obscured by the darkness, and the only sound is from the children slowly climbing down.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
 Violet was lying. It was not okay.  
 It was not half okay. It was not  
 even one twenty-seventh okay. The  
 climb down the shadowy passageway  
 felt like falling into a deep hole  
 at the bottom of a deep pit on the  
 bottom floor of a dungeon that was  
 deep underground, and it was the  
 least okay situation the  
 Baudelaires had ever encountered.

The children finally reach the bottom, and realize what their rope was clanging against--a lock. It's attached to a CAGE, and the cage is holding the Quagmires.

DUNCAN  
 I'm dreaming. I must be dreaming.

ISADORA  
 How can you be dreaming if I'm  
 having the same dream?

Violet reaches her hand through the bars. The Quagmires retreat.

VIOLET  
 You're not dreaming. It's me,  
 Violet.

KLAUS  
 And it's really me, Klaus.

SUNNY  
 Sunny!

The Quagmires come forward and are thrown into relief from the small amount of light. They are covered in dirt and grime and look haunted.

DUNCAN  
 Can it really, really be you?

VIOLET  
 (tearful)  
 Oh, yes.

Isadora grabs her hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

33.

ISADORA

We're not dreaming, Duncan. They're really here.

They all try to hug each other as best as they can through the bars of the cage, half laughing and half crying.

ISADORA (CONT'D)

How in the world did you know where we are? We don't even know where we are.

KLAUS

You're in a secret passageway inside 667 Dark Avenue. But we didn't know you'd be here. We're trying to find out what Gunther--sorry, Count Olaf--is up to.

DUNCAN

We know what he's up to. Every second we spend with him, all he does is brag about his horrible plans. We try and write down everything he tells us.

He pulls a DARK GREEN NOTEBOOK from underneath his shirt.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

I may be a kidnap victim, but I'm still a journalist.

ISADORA

And I'm still a poet.

She pulls out her own BLACK NOTEBOOK and reads from it to the Baudelaires.

ISADORA (CONT'D)

*On Auction Day, when the sun goes down, Gunther will sneak us out of town.*

VIOLET

How will he do that?

DUNCAN

He's planning on smuggling us away to some faraway island where no one will ever find us. Once he has our fortune, he says he'll take us and--

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

34.

ISADORA

Don't say it.

KLAUS

Don't worry, Isadora. We'll figure something out.

DUNCAN

We can help--a little bit. He's going to hide us in one of the items at the In Auction and have one of his associates place the highest bid.

VIOLET

Which item?

ISADORA

We don't know. He's told us so many terrible secrets, Violet.

KLAUS

We'll have plenty of time to discuss that once we get you out of here.

Violet ties her hair back with her ribbon and examines the lock on the cage.

VIOLET

(thinking furiously)

If we're going to rescue you, then my siblings and I have to climb back up to the penthouse right away.

DUNCAN

You're leaving us?

VIOLET

There aren't any materials down here, and I'll need Klaus and Sunny's help.

They all hug one last time.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

We'll be back as soon as we can.  
Don't worry, Quagmires.

The Baudelaires begin their treacherous climb.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - KITCHEN 1 - NIGHT

The children sit in one of the penthouse's numerous kitchens. This one has a bright blue oven.

VIOLET  
We need to search the penthouse.

KLAUS  
For what?

VIOLET  
I need you to search for long,  
slender objects made of iron.

SUNNY  
Agoula?

VIOLET  
The easiest way to get the  
Quagmires out of that cage will be  
by welding.

KLAUS  
I thought welding required a lot of  
complicated equipment?

VIOLET  
(smiling)  
Usually it does. But a welding  
torch is a tool, and tools are out.  
So we'll have to improvise.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Violet opens the oven and looks inside

B) Violet turns the oven on and sets it to the highest  
temperature

C) Violet opens the drawers in the kitchen, searching for  
oven mitts. She finds two, and places them on the countertop

D) Violet looks at the clock--it's past midnight. Sweat  
rolls down her forehead

E) Violet opens up the oven to check the heat

BACK TO SCENE

Klaus and Sunny re-enter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

36.

KLAUS

We hit the jackpot.

He holds up two FIRE POKERS.

KLAUS (CONT'D)

Fireplaces must have been in at  
some point.

VIOLET

You really did hit the jackpot.  
Now, when I open the door of the  
oven, you put them in, Klaus.  
Sunny, stand back.

Violet opens the door to the oven, and Klaus puts the pokers  
in. The door won't shut.

The children sit on the countertop, as far away from the  
heat of the oven as possible.

KLAUS

I'm nervous. I mean, I'm anxious. I  
don't like leaving the Quagmires  
down there all alone.

VIOLET

I'm anxious, too. But the only  
thing we can do is wait.

Klaus and Sunny sigh and nod. Sunny nestles up against Klaus  
and closes her eyes. Klaus begins to doze off too.

Violet watches the clock as the hands drag slowly.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

They're ready!

She distributes the oven mitts.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Hold them very, very carefully.  
They're hot enough to melt metal,  
so imagine what they could do if  
they touched us. But I'm sure we  
can manage.

Violet and Klaus each grab a poker. The tips are white-hot.

SUNNY

Go?

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE LANDING - NIGHT

The doors of the ersatz elevator open once more. The children look over the edge, Violet and Klaus holding their homemade welding torches.

KLAUS  
It'll be tougher to go down this  
time. But I'm sure we can manage.

SUNNY  
Zeleston.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
This meant something along the  
lines of, "It'll be terrifying to  
climb down that horrible passageway  
again."

SUNNY  
Enipy.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
And this probably meant, "But I'm  
sure we can manage."

Violet takes a deep breath, and begins climbing down. Klaus and Sunny follow suit.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - ELEVATOR SHAFT - NIGHT

The Baudelaires make their way down their rope. The light is dim, but the white-hot points of the fire pokers can be seen.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
One of the greatest myths in the  
world--and the phrase "greatest  
myths" is just a fancy way of  
saying "big fat lies"--is that  
troublesome things get less and  
less troublesome if you do them  
more and more. The truth is that  
troublesome things tend to remain  
troublesome no matter how many  
times you do them, and you should  
avoid doing them unless they are  
absolutely urgent.

The children reach the bottom and look in the cage. The Quagmires are gone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

38.

VIOLET

They're gone! They're gone and it's  
all my fault!

She throws her welding torch down, and it sizzles. She's on  
the verge of tears.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

My invention was supposed to save  
them! I'm a terrible inventor, and  
a horrible friend.

Klaus tosses his welding torch aside and grabs her  
shoulders.

KLAUS

You're the best inventor I know,  
and your invention was a good one.  
It's not your fault that we didn't  
rescue them. It's Olaf's.

They all sit. Sunny strokes Violet's hair gently.

VIOLET

I guess I know that. I'm just sad  
the time wasn't ripe for my  
invention.

KLAUS

The time may not have been ripe for  
your invention, but that doesn't  
mean it isn't ripe for my  
researching skills.

SUNNY

Huh?

KLAUS

Gunther might have snatched them,  
but we know where he's taking  
them--to Veblen Hall. He's going to  
hide them inside one of the auction  
items.

VIOLET

But the Quagmires didn't know which  
one.

KLAUS

(smiling)

If we climb back up to the  
penthouse, I think I can figure it  
out.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - LIBRARY - DAY

Klaus hurries through the library and finds Gunther's AUCTION CATALOG. He begins speed-reading, his eyes full of intensity.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - VIOLET'S BEDROOM - DAY

Violet stores the ersatz rope underneath her bed. Sunny finds a note on Violet's pillow.

SUNNY

Note!

She hands the note to Violet, and rests her head on the pillow.

VIOLET

(reading the note)

"Children, I couldn't find you this morning to say good-bye. I had to leave early to buy magenta paper clips. Esmé will take you to the In Auction at Veblen Hall at 10:30 sharp, so be sure to be ready, or she'll be very annoyed. See you soon, Jerome."

They both glance at the clock. It's already 10.

SUNNY

Oy gevalt!

VIOLET

Oy gevalt is right. Let's find Klaus.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - LIBRARY - DAY

Violet runs into the library, Sunny in her arms.

KLAUS

I've been skipping a lot of lots, but I'm still no closer to figuring out where the Quagmires will be. There are too many options.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Gunther closes a giant globe around Duncan and Isadora

B) The Quagmires move their fingers just in time as a grand piano lid slams down

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

40.

C) Gunther rests his hand against a giant STATUE OF A RED HERRING, looking as if he's just sealed it

BACK TO SCENE

Klaus's finger moves along the catalog, down to lot #50. Before the text comes into focus, he gasps. Violet leans forward.

VIOLET  
I can't believe it. I simply can't believe it.

SUNNY  
Wow.

KLAUS  
There's no description, but that has to be where they're hidden. Let's find Esmé.

The children take off running. Lot #50 comes into focus. It's "V.F.D."

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM 2 - DAY

Esmé reclines on a chaise longue, drinking a can of parsley soda. She looks bemused, her eyebrows raised.

The Baudelaires sit in a semi-circle on the floor in front of her, relaying their story.

KLAUS  
...and one of the items in the catalog is listed as "V.F.D.," which is the secret that the Quagmires tried to tell us about right before they were--

ESMÉ  
Kidnapped! This is terrible. This is the least smashing thing I have ever heard. Gunther is Count Olaf, the Quagmires are in his clutches, and he's going to auction them off!

VIOLET  
Exactly.

SUNNY  
Ja!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

41.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)

This meant something like, "You got it, Esmé!"

ESMÉ

This is certainly a complicated plot. I'm surprised you children were able to figure it out, but I'm glad you did.

She pauses to remove a speck of dust from her fingernail.

ESMÉ (CONT'D)

And now there's only one thing to do. We'll put a stop to it.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE - FOYER - DAY

The Baudelaires march behind Esmé, who's moving rather sedately.

VIOLET

Klaus and I will take turns carrying you, Sunny.

She picks her up.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

That way the trip down the stairs will be quicker.

Esmé opens the front door and they step out onto the landing.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE LANDING - DAY

ESMÉ

(brightly)

Oh, we don't have to walk down all those stairs.

KLAUS

That's true. I forgot that elevators are back in.

Esmé puts her arms around the children in an affectionate way. She presses the up button on the elevator.

ESMÉ

(smiling)

That's right. We'll take the elevator.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

42.

She sweeps the children forward with her arms, pushing them down the elevator shaft.

The screen cuts to black. There is no sound.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)  
Sometimes words are not enough.  
There are some circumstances so  
utterly wretched that I cannot  
describe them.

There's a soft, stretchy sound.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.) [CONT'D]  
But I can tell you that they did  
not die. Not one hair on their  
heads had been harmed by the time  
they finally stopped tumbling  
through the darkness. They survived  
simply because they did not reach  
the bottom.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - ELEVATOR SHAFT - DAY

Dim light and sound come rushing back. The Baudelaires stare at each other in horror and relief, and then hug. They grab at what is holding them up--a net.

SUNNY  
What?

VIOLET  
We're alive.

KLAUS  
We're alive. We're alive, and we're  
okay.

ESMÉ  
I wouldn't say you were okay.  
You're alive, but you're definitely  
not okay. As soon as the auction is  
over and the Quagmires are on their  
way out of the city, Gunther will  
come and get you, and I can  
guarantee that you three orphans  
will never be okay again!

VIOLET  
You mean you've known Gunther's  
true identity the entire time?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

43.

ESMÉ

Of course I did. I just had to fool you kids and my dim-witted husband into thinking he was really an auctioneer. Luckily, I'm a smashing actress, so it was easy to trick you.

KLAUS

So you've been working together with that terrible villain? How could you do that to us?

ESMÉ

He's not a terrible villain. He's a genius!

SUNNY

Bad!

VIOLET

Sunny's right! You're our guardian! You're supposed to be keeping us safe, not throwing us down elevator shafts and stealing our fortune!

ESMÉ

But I want to steal from you. I want to steal from you the way Beatrice stole from me.

INT. VEBLEN HALL - DAY - FLASHBACK

A large group of people are gathered at Jerome and Esmé's wedding reception--Mr. Poe, Justice Strauss, Uncle Monty, Aunt Josephine, the Baudelaire parents, even someone who looks like Count Olaf in disguise.

Toasts are being performed at the head table.

From behind, we see an unknown man whispering to Mrs. Baudelaire. He passes something to her underneath the table: a SUGAR BOWL.

Esmé looks on, oblivious.

BACK TO SCENE

KLAUS

What are you talking about? You're unbelievably wealthy. Why do you want even more money?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

44.

ESMÉ

Because it's in, of course. Well, toodle-oo, children. "Toodle-oo" is the in way of saying good-bye to three bratty orphans you're never going to see again.

VIOLET

(desperate)

Why? Why are you treating us so terribly?

Esmé cackles, and they hear her walk away. The children glance around, trying to think.

VIOLET

Klaus, maybe the time is ripe for your researching skills again. Can you think of some moment in history when people got out of a trap like this one?

KLAUS

(sadly)

I don't think so. In the myth of Hercules, he's trapped between two monsters named Scylla and Charybdis, just like we're trapped between the sliding doors and the floor. But he got out of the trap by turning them into whirlpools.

SUNNY

Glaucus.

Her voice sounds distant. And it is--she's climbing up the elevator shaft, using her tiny hands to grip the grooves between the bricks.

VIOLET

Sunny!

KLAUS

Sunny! No! It's too dangerous.

She climbs on determinedly, and turns around to smile at them.

SUNNY

No. Okay.

Violet and Klaus realize that she's moving rather quickly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

45.

VIOLET

If she falls, she'll just fall back  
into the net with us. She'll be  
fine.

KLAUS

Good luck, Sunny.

VIOLET

We're rooting for you, Sunny.

Sunny keeps climbing, and Violet and Klaus gaze upward  
apprehensively.

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE LANDING - DAY

Sunny pulls herself up onto the landing, smiling  
triumphantly.

SUNNY

Top!

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - ELEVATOR SHAFT - DAY

KLAUS

Oh, Sunny! You did it!

VIOLET

Way to go! Now, go get the rope  
from under my bed, and we'll climb  
up.

SUNNY (O.S.)

Yuppo!

Violet and Klaus are amazed by their sister's bravery.

VIOLET

I couldn't have climbed all the way  
up this passageway. Not when I was  
Sunny's age.

KLAUS

Me neither. She's so brave. I still  
can't believe Esmé. She's as ersatz  
as this elevator.

VIOLET

She had us completely fooled that  
Gunther had her completely fooled.  
But what was she talking about when  
she said Beatrice--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

46.

SUNNY (O.S.)

Tada!

KLAUS

Sunny, drop the rope down here and climb back down!

VIOLET

Why? We need to go up.

KLAUS

The doorman will stop us. There must be some kind of passageway at the bottom of the elevator shaft. How else could Gunther have gotten the Quagmires to Veblen Hall?

VIOLET

I hadn't thought of that. Sunny, start climbing down!

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - PENTHOUSE LANDING - DAY

Sunny is clutching the ersatz rope, and jumps into the elevator shaft.

SUNNY

Geronimo!

INT. 667 DARK AVENUE - ELEVATOR SHAFT - DAY

She bounces onto the net with Violet and Klaus, giggling.

VIOLET

Great work, Sunny.

She takes the rope and begins tying it to one of the pegs that is holding the net up.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Sunny, can you start biting a hole in the net while I secure the rope?

Sunny bares her teeth.

KLAUS

What can I do?

VIOLET

You can pray this works.

Violet and Sunny set to work. Violet drops the end of the rope through the hole, and they hear it clink against the cage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

47.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I can't believe we're climbing down this passageway again.

KLAUS

I know what you mean. If someone had asked, that day on Briny Beach, if I ever thought we'd be climbing up and down an empty elevator shaft in an attempt to rescue a pair of triplets, I would have said never in a million years. And now we're doing it for the fifth time in 24 hours. What happened to us?

VIOLET

(quietly)

Misfortune.

KLAUS

A terrible fire.

SUNNY

(decisively)

Olaf.

She begins climbing down the rope, and Violet and Klaus follow.

They reach the bottom, and see the empty cage. Violet picks up the fire pokers, and hands one to Klaus. They look around, and see that there is indeed a hallway of sorts leading off from the passage.

VIOLET

We should take these with us. We don't know what we'll encounter in that hallway, and I don't want to come up shorthanded.

They begin feeling their way along the dark hallway.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)

"Shorthanded" is a word which here means "unprepared," and Violet was thinking that three children alone in a dark hallway holding fire pokers were perhaps a bit more prepared than three children alone in a dark hallway holding nothing at all. And I'm sorry to tell you that she was absolutely right. As they took one step after another,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

48.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.) (cont'd)  
the Baudelaire children needed to  
be as longhanded as possible for  
the element of surprise that was  
waiting for them.

KLAUS  
(feeling around)  
I think we're at the end.

VIOLET  
Should we turn around and climb  
back up?

KLAUS  
We'll never get to Veblen Hall in  
time.

They both sigh, defeated.

SUNNY  
Up!

The three of them look up.

There's a tiny, pencil-width strip of light. Violet pokes at  
it with the fire poker, and black dust begins to fall. The  
strip widens.

VIOLET  
Klaus! Look!

Klaus begins poking at the ceiling with her, and the black  
dust rains down on them.

SUNNY  
Ugh!

KLAUS  
It does taste awful.

They keep poking the ceiling, and the strip of light becomes  
a square.

VIOLET  
It's a trapdoor! I know what to do.

She begins to pry at the square of light with the poker.

VIOLET (CONT'D)  
These pokers may not have worked as  
welding torches, but they can work  
as a crowbar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

49.

There's a tremendous groan, and the door swings down. ASHES rain down in earnest. Sunlight streams in, illuminating the hallway.

KLAUS  
You did it! The time was ripe for  
your inventing skills!

Violet raises Sunny up, and she and Klaus climb up through the trapdoor as well.

EXT. EMPTY LOT - DAY

The children try to adjust to the bright sunlight. They rub their eyes and look around, completely disoriented.

They're standing in a VACANT LOT and are completely covered in ashes. A mailman who is strolling past stops dead, his mouth agape.

VIOLET  
Excuse me, sir. We need to get to  
Veblen Hall. It's an emergency. Can  
you tell us where it is?

MAILMAN  
(pointing)  
Ju-just two blo-blocks that way.  
Please don't hurt me.

KLAUS  
We're not going to hurt you.

MAILMAN  
Ghosts always say that.

VIOLET  
But we're not ghosts.

MAILMAN  
(rushing, obviously  
frightened)  
I saw you rise out of the ashes  
myself, as if you had come from the  
center of the earth. People have  
told me that it's haunted on the  
empty lot where the Baudelaire  
mansion burned down, and now I know  
it's true.

He walks off hurriedly. The Baudelaires look around, overwhelmed with emotion. Silent tears stream down their faces.



INT. VEBLEN HALL - DAY

The In Auction is in media res. Veblen Hall is an architectural marvel--vaulted ceilings, marble floors, intricate woodwork. Three BANNERS hang from the ceiling. One says "In," one says "Auction," and the other has a portrait of Gunther on it.

There's a stage at the front of the hall. Gunther stands at a lectern, and Esmé sits beside him, gazing admiringly at him.

The hall is full of people in pinstripe suits sipping parsley soda.

GUNTHER

Lot #46, please. Please, gentlemen and ladies, see the vase with blue flowers. Vases in. Glass in. Flowers in, please, especially blue flowers. Who bid?

Esmé holds up the vase, and people begin to bid.

The Baudelaires slip quietly into the hall, observing the situation and dusting themselves off. Waiters in salmon costumes from Café Salmonella mill about, serving salmon puffs and parsley soda.

KLAUS

(whispering)

We're just in time. V.F.D. is Lot #50. Do we wait to speak up until then, or do we confront Gunther right now?

VIOLET

I don't know. We were so concentrated on getting here that we didn't even think of a plan.

Jerome appears as if from nowhere.

VIOLET

Jerome! We're so glad to see you.

JEROME

I'm so glad to see you, too, children. Are you feeling better?

The children look up at Jerome. They know if they're direct with him, he'll be too passive to help.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

51.

KLAUS

We're great. Can you do us a favor,  
Jerome?

JEROME

Of course! What is it?

KLAUS

My sisters and I would really like  
to own one of the lots.

JEROME

I didn't know you three were  
interested in in items!

VIOLET

(catching on)

Oh, yes. We're very anxious to own  
Lot #50--V.F.D.

JEROME

What does that stand for?

KLAUS

It's a surprise. For all of us.

JEROME

If it's important to you, I'll bid  
on it. I just don't want you to get  
spoiled. There's also someone here  
I'm sure you'll be happy to see.

He leads them over toward the front of the crowd. Mr. Poe  
whips around. He's wearing a pinstripe suit and sipping on  
parsley soda.

MR. POE

You could knock me over with a  
feather. What are you doing here,  
Baudelaires?

KLAUS

What are you doing here? You told  
us you would be on a helicopter  
ride to a mountain peak, looking  
for the Quagmires.

MR. POE

Those reports turned out to be  
false. I now know for certain that  
the Quagmires are being forced to  
work at a glue factory nearby. I'm  
heading there after this. Now that

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

52.

MR. POE (cont'd)  
I'm making more money, my wife  
wanted me to buy some ocean  
decorations.

VIOLET  
But--

MR. POE  
Shush! Gunther is on Lot #48.  
That's the one I want.

Gunther is doing a bunch of weird hand motions by the red  
herring statue.

GUNTHER  
Please, Lot #48. Is large statue of  
fish, painted red, please. Very  
big, so very in. Big enough to  
sleep inside of, please.

MR. POE  
One hundred!

DOORMAN (O.S.)  
Two hundred!

JEROME  
Look, children! It's the doorman.  
He must want the statue for the  
lobby.

MR. POE  
Three hundred!

KLAUS  
Mr. Poe, there's something you need  
to know about Gunther. He's  
really--

MR. POE  
An in auctioneer. I know.

DOORMAN (O.S.)  
Three hundred fifty!

VIOLET  
No, no. He's Count Olaf in  
disguise!

Mr. Poe coughs horribly and almost spills his parsley soda.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

53.

MR. POE

Four hundred! Don't be ridiculous,  
Violet. Gunther is just a  
foreigner. You're being xenophobic.

DOORMAN

Four hundred fifty!

VIOLET

We are *not* being xenophobic. He's  
not a foreigner. He's Count Olaf.

MR. POE

You're not making any sense. Can we  
please discuss this later? Four  
hundred seventy-five!

DOORMAN (O.S.)

Five hundred!

MR. POE

I give up. Five hundred dollars is  
too much for a red herring.

GUNTHER

Five hundred is highest bid,  
please. Please will winner give  
money to Mrs. Squalor, please.

The doorman walks up on stage, giving Esmé a stack of cash.  
With some difficulty, he lifts the statue and carries it off  
the stage.

MR. POE

Is that your doorman, Jerome?

JEROME

Yes. Would you care to meet him?

The doorman is making his way to the back of the hall, and  
Jerome taps him on the shoulder.

JEROME (CONT'D)

Come meet Mr. Poe!

DOORMAN

I don't have time to meet anyone. I  
have to get this to the boss's  
truck and--

(noticing the Baudelaires)

You're not supposed to be here!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

54.

JEROME

It's okay. They're feeling better now.

DOORMAN

(loudly)

Hey, boss!

Both Gunther and Esmé turn their heads in his direction. He points at the Baudelaires.

DOORMAN (CONT'D)

The orphans are here!

Esmé gasps, and drops the stack of cash she's holding. Gunther smiles, and his eyes shine very brightly.

GUNTHER

Orphans in. Okay for orphans to be here, please.

Esmé looks at him confusedly. She shrugs, and then gives the doorman the "a-okay" gesture. He shrugs, smiles at the Baudelaires, and then carries the statue outside.

GUNTHER

We will skip Lot #49, please. We will bid on Lot #50, please, and then, please, auction is over.

MR. POE

But what about all the other items?

ESMÉ

Skip 'em. I've made enough money today.

JEROME

I never thought I'd hear Esmé say that.

GUNTHER

Lot #50, please, is V.F.D., please.

A large cardboard BOX--large enough for storing two children--is pushed onstage. "V.F.D." is printed on it in big letters.

GUNTHER

Who bid?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

55.

JEROME  
(winking at the children)  
I bid twenty!

MR. POE  
What in the world is V.F.D.?

VIOLET  
It's a surprise. Stick around and  
find out.

AUCTION ATTENDEE  
Fifty!

JEROME  
Fifty-five!

AUCTION ATTENDEE  
One hundred!

JEROME  
Goodness, children. This is getting  
expensive. Are you sure you want  
this V.F.D.?

MR. POE  
You're buying this for the  
children? Please, Mr. Squalor,  
don't spoil them.

VIOLET  
(worried)  
He's not spoiling us! Please buy it  
for us, Jerome. We'll explain  
later.

Jerome sighs.

JEROME  
I guess it's only natural that  
you'd want some in things, after  
spending time with Esmé. One  
hundred and eight!

AUCTION ATTENDEE  
Two hundred!

JEROME  
Two hundred and four. I won't bid  
any higher, children. Bidding is  
too much like arguing for me to  
enjoy it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

56.

AUCTION ATTENDEE  
Three hundred!

VIOLET  
I beg of you, *please* buy this for  
us.

JEROME  
(shaking his head)  
I'm sorry, but no. It's not worth  
it to spend money on silly in  
things.

Klaus turns to Mr. Poe.

KLAUS  
Mr. Poe. Would you be willing to  
loan us some money from the bank?

MR. POE  
To buy a cardboard box? I should  
say not.

GUNTHER  
Final bid is three hundred, please.  
Please, sir, if--

SUNNY  
THOUSAND!

Everyone gasps, and looks around. Sunny is smiling  
triumphantly, and so is Esmé.

SUNNY (CONT'D)  
Thousand!

JEROME  
Where in the world did Sunny get  
that much money?

MR. POE  
She did work as a receptionist when  
the children were in boarding  
school. But I had no idea her  
salary was that high.

GUNTHER  
The highest bid is now one  
thousand.

AUCTION ATTENDEE  
Good grief! I'm not going to pay  
more than one thousand dollars for  
V.F.D. It's not worth it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

57.

VIOLET  
(fiercely)  
It is to us.

The Baudelaires march up on stage.

Everyone looks confused, except for Gunther, who is smiling at the children.

GUNTHER  
Give your thousand, please, to Mrs.  
Squalor. And then auction is over.

KLAUS  
(loudly)  
The only thing that is over is your  
horrible plan.

SUNNY  
Silko!

She begins tearing into the box with her teeth.

ESMÉ  
Wait a minute! You can't open the  
box until you give me the money!  
It's illegal!

KLAUS  
What is illegal is auctioning off  
children. And soon this whole room  
will see that you have broken the  
law!

Everyone in the hall gasps.

MR. POE  
What's this?

Mr. Poe and Jerome make their way onto the stage.

VIOLET  
The Quagmire triplets are in this  
box. Gunther and Esmé are trying to  
smuggle them out of the country.

JEROME  
Esmé! Is this true?

She doesn't respond. The children keep tearing at the box.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

58.

VIOLET

Hang on, Duncan and Isadora!

Mr. Poe begins coughing.

MR. POE

Now look here, Baudelaires! I have reliable information that the Quagmires are in a glue factory--

KLAUS

We'll see about that.

Sunny rips the box right down the middle with her teeth, and it tips over, spilling DOILIES everywhere.

VIOLET

(emotional/frustrated)

*These* are *doilies*. This box is full of *doilies*!

AUCTION ATTENDEE

Of course. They're very fancy doilies. What else would V.F.D. stand for?

GUNTHER

(smiling)

Yes. What else could it stand for, please?

VIOLET

I don't know, but the Quagmires didn't find out a secret about fancy napkins. Where have you put them, Olaf?

GUNTHER

What is Olaf, please?

JEROME

Now, Violet. We agreed that we wouldn't argue about Gunther anymore. Please excuse the children, Gunther. I think they must be ill.

KLAUS

We are not ill! We've been tricked! This box of doilies was a red herring!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

59.

JEROME

But the red herring was Lot #48.

MR. POE

Children, I'm very disturbed by your behavior. I would have thought that the Squalors would be raising you better than this.

ESMÉ

Well, we're not going to raise them anymore. Not after today. It's not worth it to have orphans, even if they're in.

JEROME

Esmé! They lost their parents! Where else can they go?

ESMÉ

Don't argue with me. And I'll tell you where they can go. They can go straight to--

GUNTHER

With me, please.

He puts a hand on Violet's shoulder, and then Klaus's. He raises his leg as if he's going to put his foot on Sunny's shoulder, but it lands on a doily instead.

He slips and falls, and doilies go flying everywhere.

GUNTHER (CONT'D)

Ah! PLEASE!

As he falls, his monocle falls out and one of his fancy boots splits--revealing the TATTOO of an eye on his ankle.

As he scrambles to get back up, doilies fly everywhere.

JEROME

My goodness! He has a tattoo of an eye on his ankle!

MR. POE

He's not an auctioneer! He's not even a foreigner! He's Count Olaf!

ESMÉ

He's more than Count Olaf! He's a genius! And he's the handsomest, inest man in town!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

60.

JEROME

Don't be absurd! Ruthless,  
kidnapping villains aren't in!

COUNT OLAF

You're right. We're not in. We're  
out--out of town! Come on, Esmé!

He grabs her hand and they leap from the stage, shoving the crowd aside.

Doilies are flying everywhere, and people begin to slip and fall. The Baudelaires and Mr. Poe give chase. The crowd tries to close in, but everyone begins to slip and fall on the doilies.

Olaf and Esmé make it through the door, which the doorman is holding for them. The Baudelaires keep following, dodging all the fallen attendees.

EXT. VEULEN HALL - DAY

The Baudelaires burst through the door and out onto the steps of Veulen Hall.

Olaf, Esmé, and the doorman are piling into a pickup truck. The red herring statue is loaded in the back. The doorman has rolled up his sleeves, revealing that he's actually FERNALD, THE HOOK-HANDED MAN.

KLAUS

The hook-handed man! He was right  
under our noses the entire time!

COUNT OLAF

He might have been right under your  
noses, but he'll soon be at your  
throats. I'll be back, Baudelaires!  
Soon the Quagmire sapphires will be  
mine, but I haven't forgotten about  
your fortune!

VIOLET

Where are Duncan and Isadora?

Olaf and Esmé burst into laughter. Esmé points to the statue in the truck.

ESMÉ

We used two red herrings to fool  
you! Ha!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

61.

The engine roars to life, and the truck pulls off. Fernald honks the horn as they round the corner. The children chase after it, but soon realize it is hopeless.

ESMÉ (O.S.) [CONT'D]  
Toodle-oo, orphans!

The children retreat to the steps of the hall. Tears stream down their faces.

Mr. Poe and Jerome come outside, bringing doilies with them.

MR. POE  
I'll call the police!

He slips on a doily and lands on his butt. Jerome helps him up and back inside.

JEROME  
I'm sure the police will catch Count Olaf, children. Esmé may have left--and I'm not going to argue with her--but I'm still your guardian, and I'm going to take you far away from here. So far away that we can forget about Count Olaf and the Quagmires and everything else.

KLAUS  
Forget about Olaf? How could we?

VIOLET  
And forget about the Quagmires? I don't *want* to forget them. We have to find them.

SUNNY  
Yeah!

KLAUS  
They're right. We have to track down Olaf and learn all the secrets he's keeping from us. It'll lead us to the Quagmires, too.

JEROME  
We're not going to track down Count Olaf. As your guardian, I cannot allow you to do so. Wouldn't you rather live safely with me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

62.

VIOLET

Yes, but our friends are in danger.  
We *must* go and rescue them.

JEROME

Well, I'm not going to argue. You  
children are very dear to me, but I  
don't have your courage. Your  
mother always said I wasn't brave  
enough, and I guess she was right.  
I'll tell Mr. Poe to find you a new  
guardian.

The children stare at him in disbelief. He begins to walk  
away. He turns to them.

JEROME (CONT'D)

Good luck, Baudelaires. I think you  
will need it.

Violet sighs, and stares out at the street.

VIOLET

I hope my inventing skills don't  
fail us, because we're going to  
need more than good luck to rescue  
the Quagmires.

KLAUS

I hope my research skills don't  
fail us, because we're going to  
need more than good luck to solve  
the mystery of the hallway and the  
Baudelaire mansion.

SUNNY

Bite!

They look at one another with faint smiles.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.)

Although their situation was as  
dire as ever, the Baudelaire  
children smiled. They smiled  
because they knew they wouldn't  
fail each other, as Jerome and Mr.  
Poe and all their other guardians  
had failed them.

SERIES OF SHOTS - FLASHBACK

EXT. COUNT OLAF'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

A) Violet throws her grappling hook at Count Olaf's tower

INT. AUNT JOSEPHINE'S HOUSE - LIBRARY - DAY

B) Klaus decodes Aunt Josephine's suicide note

EXT. DAMOCLES DOCK - DAY

C) Sunny cracks Captain Sham's peg leg with her teeth,  
revealing that he's Count Olaf

BACK TO SCENE

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.) [CONT'D]  
No matter how many ersatz and  
unfortunate things they would  
encounter in the future, the  
Baudelaires knew they could rely on  
each other for the rest of their  
lives.

Doilies whip around in the wind, and a CROW flies overhead.  
The children sit resolutely.

LEMONY SNICKET (V.O.) [CONT'D]  
And this, at least, felt like the  
one thing in the world that was  
true.

FADE OUT

END OF SHOW

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